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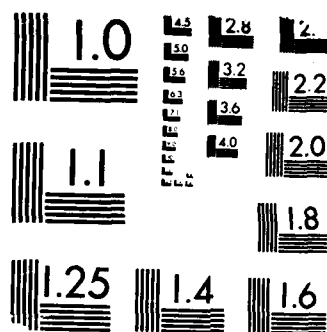
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Essentially, most of the possible options would require a greater degree of regional cooperative approaches, measures, and mechanisms. The important element of this aspect is that the regional approach should be oriented towards autonomous arrangements amongst the sovereign states of the region concerned rather than under any great power patronage. Only such an approach can satisfy the requirements of national security.

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

SECURITY OF SMALL STATES, PROBLEMS OF THE STATES  
OF THE SOUTH ASIAN REGION AND BANGLADESH'S OPTIONS FOR SECURITY

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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U.S. Army War College  
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013  
10 March 1988

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# ABSTRACT

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# SECURITY OF SMALL STATES, PROBLEMS OF THE STATES OF THE SOUTH ASIAN REGION AND BANGLADESH'S OPTIONS FOR SECURITY

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Security which, to states, means freedom from all forms of internal and external violations, is always taken very seriously by the members of the international community. This is because security affects not only the satisfaction of a nation's needs, but also the fundamental issue of the latter's survival as a viable entity. To ensure their survival, states have evolved various strategies of which the common ones include unilateral or collective military build-up, organization of various forms of alliance systems, acceptance, especially by some small states, of the military protection of stronger powers, as well as various forms of diplomatic trade-offs and maneuvers. Even though the strategies adopted by states usually differ from one state or group of states to another, they are usually tailored towards a common goal, which is to deter potential enemies, i.e., inhibit aggression from the latter. It is in this sense that deterrence is basic to virtually all defense plans. In deciding on the best survival strategy for any given state or group of states, consideration must be given to the peculiar circumstances of the state or group of states concerned.

The security dilemmas faced by many smaller states in the international system have become increasingly more acute. This is not simply a function of smallness considered in terms of limited capabilities. It is clear too that since the 1970's the operational setting of international relations has become progressively more complex and in many respects hostile.<sup>1</sup>

A major aspect of these developments is the growth of nonmilitary threats. As such the business of being and remaining a smaller sovereign

state in modern international relations has become increasingly more difficult.

#### ENDNOTES

1. R. P. Barston, The Other Power, Gorge Allen and Unwin, London, 1973.

## CHAPTER II

### SECURITY OF SMALL STATES

#### Defining Security in the Context of the Small States

The commonplace definition of security is immunity of a state or nation to threats originating mainly from outside its territorial boundaries. According to Walter Lippman, "security rises and falls with the ability of a nation to deter an attack or defeat it."<sup>1</sup> He further argues, "a nation is secure to the extent to which it was not in danger of having to sacrifice core values, if it wishes to avoid war and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by such a victory in such a war."<sup>2</sup> Perhaps core values in the context of a nation state are the values and aspirations that not only identify the nation as is known but also those which guide the course of the nation.

Talukder Maniruzzaman says, "By security we mean protection and preservation of minimum core values of any nation: political independence and territorial integrity."<sup>3</sup>

#### Diplomacy and Security

The relationship between diplomacy and security is complex and evolving. The question of what constitutes security can be addressed from three perspectives--the international system, nation state and the individual. Only the first two of these are considered here. Internationally, security can be thought of in terms of the stability of the international system, defined as the level of tension or violence and the corresponding extent to which state interests can be accommodated through diplomacy, without recourse to violence, on the basis of mediation, rule and norm setting. In the event of violence occurring, the task of diplomacy is ultimately peaceful settlement, through the negotiation of cease-fires, withdrawal and other measures of a longer term

nature. From a quite different perspective violence may be a preferred end in itself and diplomacy the means of orchestrating violence rather than bringing about a negotiated solution.

At a national level, security has traditionally been considered in terms of responses to essentially external threats of a military kind. From this perspective diplomacy features the statecraft of force, involving such actions as deterring aggressors, building up coalitions, threatening or warning an opponent and seeking international support or legitimacy for the use or control of force. The advent of large numbers of new states into the international community, many with preoccupying internal problems, underlined the inadequacy of traditional definitions. In fact, national security, that already ambiguous symbol, had to take on an additional dimension. To reflect this, the definition of security needs to be broadened to include, for certain states, regime maintenance as a primary national security objective.<sup>4</sup> Apart from this, it is also useful to add to the conventional classification of states a further category made up of those states with acute external and internal national security problems--the "dual security" states.

#### Small States - A Meaningful Frame of Analysis

The security of small states, specially of those in the Third World, attracted little scholarly attention compared to the magnitude of the problem. The magnitude is indicated by the incidence of violence and local wars since World War II on the one hand and the internal turmoils and instabilities in the Third World countries on the other. By one estimate, out of the 64 wars that have taken place since the World War II, 63 took place in Third World areas. Of them, 38 were interstate, 18 internal with significant external inputs and seven anticolonial.<sup>5</sup> By another estimate that covered the period 1945-1976 a total of 120 armed conflicts took place on the territories

of 71 countries involving 84 countries of which only five were fought on the territories of developed countries but 64 of them were precipitated by the industrially developed Western countries. More interestingly, 36 out of the 120 local conflicts were confined within the state boundaries.<sup>6</sup>

Thus the postwar conflict dynamics displayed the dominant trend of almost exclusive Third World focus, internal instabilities and violence combined with substantial external involvement. Compared to this, however, the postwar security deliberations have been dominated by the systemic-security paradigm based on the assumption that global security is basically contingent on the East-West balance. The intellectual resources and literature on security that have grown prodigiously in the postwar period, therefore, remain ethnocentric in tradition and partial in scope with the vast majority of the states that constitute the Third World finding only peripheral treatment to the extent they have bearing on the central balance. The security problems of the small states who, in turn, constitute more than 80 percent of the Third World get further relegated. A second reason for the peripheral position of the small states is that the types of problems usually faced by the small states are often characterized as those of underdevelopment and backwardness rather than of security as such.

Only in very recent years have small states' security attracted some academic attention. But wide divergence persists among scholars regarding the precise definition of "small states." The term "small states" figured in international politics for the first time as small powers in contrast to great powers, in the Treaty of Chaumont concluded in March 1814. The treaty categorized those states (powers) as "small" which were not in a position to provide 60,000 men each for the next 20 years in the event of another French

aggression.<sup>7</sup> The salience of this definition is twofold: it laid emphasis on military or war capability measured in terms of armed forces and the small states needed tacit recognition as small by the powers. The recognition aspect was later combined with perceptual factors by Rothstein who defined a small state as one,

Which recognizes that it cannot obtain security primarily by use of its own capability and it must rely fundamentally on the aid of other states, institutions and processes or developments and so, the small power's belief in its inability to rely on its own measure must also be recognized by other states involved in the international politics.<sup>8</sup>

In subsequent academic parlance two trends were observed: considering "small" in terms of the basic and commonplace indicators, basis of size-- territory and population, GNP, productive capability, resource base, industrial capacity on the one hand and power capability on the other. International organizations like the World Bank, IMF, Commonwealth Secretariate categorize small states on the basis of population; the dividing line being one million. Following this size limit, the international organizations practically concentrate on the problems of what are otherwise known as those of the microstate and miniscule territories.

On the other hand, capability also gained prominence in defining small states. According to this view, small states are those which are weak economically, militarily, technologically and in industrial capacity. In respect to security, however, it was again the military or war making capability that was given the central weightage, with economic or technological and for, that matter, political capability, finding practically a supplementary role. Such a view is found among others in Talukder Maniruzzaman,

In determining a state's war making capacity, one has to look at both its potential war power and its immediate war

preparedness. . . . As to the current war preparedness of a state, the yearly military budget is probably the best indicator.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps guided by certain practical and conceptual problems, some scholars have attempted to keep the definition somewhat vague in the sense that smallness of the countries in this context is associated more with what can be called a "Third World syndrome" in which nations are subjected to a stigma of smallness in terms of their incapacity to defend their security because of inherent and enormous socioeconomic and political problems, irrespective of the size of their land area, population and even, at times, enormous wealth.<sup>10</sup> This is perhaps a very broad definition encompassing some of the large states in the Third World which may otherwise have all the "Third World syndromes." Yet, by other conventional standards like size, population, resource base, industrial and technological base and political system to overcome those syndromes, they are large.<sup>11</sup> The Commonwealth Consultative Group preferred to work on the basis of the key concept of "vulnerabilities" which also seems to be a realistic description yet lacking any precision of the qualitative attributes that constitute vulnerabilities.<sup>12</sup>

Looking at the experience of some of the small states like Singapore, Israel, etc, "small" in terms of physical size or population did not really stand in the way of attaining a certain desirable level of development and security. It may be argued that it is not smallness alone that is the issue. Poverty, isolation, particularism and sociopolitical fragility are issues that matter in regard to security. It may also be pointed out that the problems facing the small states are not unique; their particular difficulties arise from their greater vulnerability and capability to respond to crisis. By the

very nature of their size, they are susceptible to both natural and man-made disasters. We must have a starting point for which perhaps a combined index of population, geographical size, economic indicators like GNP, industrial productive capacity and current annual defense budget would be sufficient. Once we have that we are no longer concerned with the problem of "small" as such but with problems that might be aggravated by the factors of smallness as mentioned above and how to find elbow room for the small states to move and survive.

#### Distinctive Characteristics of Small States

To start with, the only general statement that can be made about the small states is that there is a sheer diversity in the level of social, political and economic development, intramural problems, geopolitical and strategic realities. Even then some general characteristics may perhaps be brought out because they more or less share a colonial past, poverty, social dislocation, population, lack of national integration and inadequate linkages with the issue of the international system.<sup>13</sup>

#### Stage of Nation Building

- o In general, the small states are at the initial stages of the nation building process which are stupendous, complicated, and of different dimensions and magnitudes.

- o Many of these erstwhile colonial societies are yet to resolve the basic problems of national identity and statehood. Lack of a national consensus on core values and goals is a major impediment to continuity and stability in development efforts.

- o The very fundamental task of providing basic needs to the fast growing population is so demanding that it leads to many ad hoc and short term



measures that affect the long term development of the countries on a stable and firm footing.

- o The small states are characterized by a very small elite base with no countervailing or alternative forces in sight. Apart from concentration of power and a tendency to stem the growth of an alternative leadership base, there is a tendency to identify regime security with state security resulting in obvious distortion in conceptualisation of national security. The nation's search for a stable political system suffers setbacks and aspirations of the many component ethnic/religious or interest groups are not reflected in the mainstream.

- o The small states have less resilience and shock absorbing capacity; two very indispensable requirements to go through the painful processes of nation building. It is often argued that the postcolonial societies in general inherit a relatively overdeveloped state structure and the administrative capability is extremely limited to withstand the test of crisis-management.

- o In most cases, seeds of nationalism and nationalistic feelings remain dormant and forces of divisiveness, cleavages, primordial loyalty and particularism affect social and political cohesion.

- o In addition to limited administrative capability, the diplomatic capability and economic leverages of small states also are inadequate to influence the external environment. In most cases, the small states have to be at the receiving end of the interplay of international forces. Moreover, the foreign policy of the small states are characterized by charisma and moralistic overtone and less backed by strength--political, military, economic and ideological forces.

### Dependency

o The small states are likely to be more dependent on larger countries and hence subject to more constraints on possible policies. The room for maneuver of the decisionmakers is correspondingly narrow as well. Moreover, there is an inertia among the decisionmakers to be dependent on larger countries as well. To an extent it is psychological weakness, a "smallness syndrome" perhaps and to an extent it fits well into the present international system of power hierarchy.

o Another dimension of dependency is the influence and manipulations of the various foreign and transnational bodies operating within the territories. This particular phenomenon poses great diplomatic and administrative challenge to the leadership of the small states in influencing the external environment to their advantage.

### Economic Underdevelopment

o The small states in general are characterized by narrow and fragile economic structure, poor and unexploited resource base, small size of domestic market, difficulties in penetrating foreign markets and lack of indigenous technology. These economics are dependent on the export earnings of one or two primary commodities. Their relative openness makes them particularly vulnerable to the vagaries of the international economy.

o Another important dimension of economic underdevelopment and dependency is the extreme debt burden which eats up the future of these nations. In a significant way debt burden is a given fact of life for most of the small states at least for the foreseeable future.

### Geostrategic Factors and Geopolitical Realities

o Many small states are in possession of one or more strategic raw materials that invite attention from potential as well as active interests of the international powers. This makes their position vulnerable. Many of the states in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, such as, Sri Lanka, South Yemen, Malaysia and Egypt (not a small state but vulnerable) because of their strategic locations become easy pawns of international politics.

o When not important in a geostrategic sense, a small state can become geopolitically important when it is located in a theater where there is a clash between two world powers. The presence of the forces of clashing world powers bestows importance on a small state. A good example of this is Afghanistan, which was never thought of as an important state, but became important because of what has happened there. Mongolia has no international importance, but it is important in the context of Sino-Soviet rivalry.

o A small state also acquires importance when it becomes a buffer state separating two big potential adversaries. It is in the interest of both countries to keep the small state intact, but it is a shaky position for the small state because its existence depends on the goodwill of the potential enemies, and it will retain its independence only until one of them acquires the capacity to strike and overpower the other. The Himalayan states of Nepal and Bhutan are the classical examples of both the buffer as well as landlocked states between China and India.

### Nature and Sources of Insecurity of the Small States

Security is a multifaceted subject. It is multidimensional in concept. It ranges from the physical, i.e., the military threat, through the political and economic to the ideological. The threat to a state can come in many forms and must be met in all those forms. It is futile for a government to prepare

and maintain a military force for physical defense only to find the state structure collapsing from within because of subversion or economic failure or an ideological explosion. Direct threats to security are easy to perceive and identify, while indirect threats are difficult to comprehend and counter.

The small states suffer from a number of vulnerabilities that in combination with other factors produce threats to security of the small states. While the small states may share these vulnerabilities with other developing states the point is, if the small states are targetted, they are inherently incapable of coping with them and they can hardly absorb the shock and traumas of the threats.

The sources of threats to security to small states can be grouped within four broad categories.<sup>14</sup> These are:

- o Threats to territorial security;
- o Threats to political security;
- o Threats to economic security;
- o Threats to technological security.

According to Talukdar Maniruzzaman threats to cultural security and psychological dependency, are also sources of threats to security.<sup>15</sup>

#### Threats to Territorial Security

Territorial threats to security are mainly the outcome of colonial legacies and historical forces. In most cases development was accompanied by artificial demarcation of borders, leaving scope for claims and counter claims.

Threats to territorial security may arise from the actions of a primary power or more powerful neighbors. Other than direct intervention in the form

of invasion or occupation of territory, external assistance might be provided to overseas based national dissidents, mercenaries, or internally to guerrilla or secessionist groups. Secessionism has proved an enduring and difficult issue as in the cases involving Chad, Eritrea, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand and Burma. The fragmentation of the modern state has in fact become a particularly noteworthy feature of contemporary international society. In some instances sessionist or separatist groups have become linked with transnational violence. More generally, transnational violence, in the form of sabotage, assassination, the taking of hostages and the highjacking or destruction of aircraft and ships has intensified and been facilitated by the relative ease of access to modern transport.<sup>16</sup> The modern state too faces major administrative problems in controlling both its territory and external policy. In this respect other threats to territorial security include refugee movements (e.g., from Mozambique to Zimbabwe or Kampuchea to Thailand or Afghanistan to Pakistan) and externally controlled illicit operations e.g., smuggling, drug traffic, arms deals and piracy. Scattered small island states in this respect face recurrent difficulties, which tend to be magnified and exacerbated if the small state is an offshore transit center close to a major power (e.g., Bahamas, Hong Kong). As Ostheimer notes, "good domestic security depends in part on the ability to guard against the undesirable movement of people and goods that threaten economic and political security."<sup>17</sup>

#### Threats to Political Security

Threats to political security are amongst the commonist forms of threat to small states. External sources of threats to political independence come through military threat/coercion, diplomatic manipulation, subversion, espionage in order to bring the small states within the orbit of influence or

coerce the nation concerned into taking certain decisions with the use of economic and political leverage.

Internally, threats to political independence arise mainly from political instability, lack of growth of political institutions, narrow elite base, threats backed by external involvement, ethnic disturbances, and extreme concentration of power in few hands. As chronic instability engulfs the nation, it becomes fertile ground for ideological penetration, subversion, espionage, etc. Moreover, the nation itself loses a sense of direction, the regime in power resorts to repressive measures out of fear psychosis and crisis-perception. As the political, military and administrative capabilities of the small states are limited the ruling regimes sometimes takes external assistance to quell internal dissent and disorder (example, Sri Lanka). The concessions given to external allies in return impinge the political independence of the small states.

Some small states have also become extremely sensitive to external media coverage of internal developments in their country. Moves to limit information may, however, have an opposite effect to that intended by creating heightened uncertainty about a regime and its policies.

#### Threats to Economic Security

Economic problems are the most substantive aspects of the security of small states because they are of immediate relevance to the people at large and also the state itself. Threats to economic security mainly concerns small resource base, extreme centralization of exports to one or two items, dependence on foreign aid and technology and extreme debt burden. Lack of or

inadequate control over resources, incursions into economic zone may also be considered serious threats to economic security.

Internally, poverty, uneven rural and urban development, dislocations and uncertainties associated with social, cultural and environmental change brought about by the very development process can profoundly affect the social and political stability and security environment of the small states. The problems are compounded by natural disasters like floods, cyclones, typhoons, drought and industrial accidents such as Bhopal in India, that sometimes destroy the economic and social base of the small states.

#### Threats to Cultural Security and Psychological Dependency

Apart from the above sources of insecurity, the small states suffer from a number of problems impinging on their autonomy. This is caused by a peculiar combination of insufficient national unity, psychological dependence, weakness in political leadership, lack of information and inertia.

Small countries will inevitably be open to foreign influence of various kinds. The lack of sufficiently strong nationalistic feelings may reflect existence of an elite whose attitudes and interests are centered on metropolitan areas. And in a small states such attitudes and values may permeate the whole structure of the society through the school system and communication media.

Psychological dependence, on the other hand, may reflect the objective conditions like total import dependence, predominance of foreign investment and foreign ownership/control of resources and installations. The decisionmakers will naturally have a low morale and the basis of self-confidence would be lacking. So much so that the decisionmakers may not be disposed to examining all possible alternatives and the game is lost before starting.

Lack of information is certainly a central reason for failure to exploit all possibilities. To negotiate successfully with external powers or an aid agency it is imperative to understand what their interests are and what alternatives, are open to them.

#### Threats to Technological Security

Threats to technological security are suggested in order to convey the problems associated with the technical development of a state. Rapid developments in a number of areas of technology, such as telecommunications and data transfer, have drawn attention to the problem of technological management. Thus, technological security is concerned with the ability of the state to evaluate, plan and coordinate both the acquisition and use of appropriate technology for developmental requirements. Rather than the piecemeal acquisition of technology, the concept of technological security places emphasis on developing national capabilities to make strategic analyses of technology.<sup>18</sup>

#### An Approach to the Security of Small States

It was believed two or three decades ago that the micro and small states were not viable entities in international policies both economically and politically. But almost all of them now exist and show signs of continued existence as nation states and as members of the United Nations and other regional and international bodies. If not for other reasons, it is extantism--that is the international ideology which supports the status quo on international frontiers which supports new states once they have been established and acts as a limitation on splitting-up of states except in extreme circumstance. Even the events in Chad, Afghanistan, Kampuchea Lebanon, etc., suggest that international ideology of status quo may at best



serve as a moral deterrent which may be broken by the large powers and once certain powers have decided to break it, international ideology becomes largely ineffective.

It must be borne in mind that security is best and most effective when it is shared, when a balance of strength is maintained--big or small--which is sufficient to make a nation feel secure and to discourage aggression. Total security for one state means insecurity for others, and in any given regional setting, no state can be secured, and at rest, if its neighbors are feeling insecure.

A pragmatic approach to regional alliances would be to view them as a means to promote confidence building, economic and political development and mutual commitment to safeguard each other's territorial integrity. The states within the grouping should strive to resolve mutual and bilateral problems through mutual discussions rather than invite outside intervention and thus globalize the issues. Defense pacts without accompanying political and economic development is an unrealistic proposition and should be held as a long term objective only. However, limited military cooperation through frequent exchanges, common training facilities and equipment, and joint exercises help in building mutual trust and camaraderie. Regional cooperation that promotes these objectives as distinct from regional security alliances is of help in containing many of the security problems of small states, though it is not a panacea for all the insecurities.

Nationalism and national integration act as a binding factor that keeps the nation together in the face of external threats and also internal secessionist tendencies. Fostering of a broad based political and economic growth ensures larger participation of the people in nation building

activities. A politically and economically stable state can negotiate from a position of strength.

Ideally, for defense, countries threatened by bigger neighbors should band together and combine their resources in order to repel aggression.

In the absence of a defense pact, it is possible to rely on the military support of a bigger power which can bring its weight to bear in defense of the small state.

Today we live in a world community which is better balanced than ever before. It is interdependent, and it is a bit more equal. Human beings are voicing ideals which the past were only expressed when they served the purpose of big powers. The smaller states are demanding a better world order, more equality, more justice, and a more equitable distribution of wealth.

We have in the United Nations a unique body, which is practically a kind of world democracy. A tiny power like Togo has the same vote in the U.N. General Assembly as that of big and superpowers. The United Nations is the conscience of the world, the voice of humanity, a light, however dim, shining in the darkness. It is, at least, a platform for denouncing evil and aggressive powers. And in order to take advantage of that platform, small states must pursue active diplomacy at the United Nations.

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### CHAPTER III

#### PROBLEMS OF THE STATES OF THE SOUTH ASIAN REGION

South Asia is generally defined as the region comprised of the seven subcontinental states of Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The region has specific geographical features and a common ecological system which affects the daily lives of its people living between the gigantic Himalayan mountain ranges in the north and the Indian Ocean in the south. It shares a common cultural and historical experience. Once considered immensely wealthy, thus inviting successive waves of invaders, the region has become increasingly inconsequential on the global scene.

The seven states constitute a troubled region, with the internal political instabilities of most of its member states creating further strains in this usually indifferent relations with the regional giant, India. It remains the pivotal state, because while other South Asian states do not have common borders with each other, India alone is everyone's neighbor. Indian diplomacy normally plays down this factor in view of suspicions endemic to the region. As President Junius Jayewardene of Sri Lanka put it to the Review on 7 June 1985, "India's neighbors are intimidated by the size of its territory, population, armed forces, weaponry and economy."<sup>1</sup>

Although South Asia accounts for only 3.31 percent of the world's land area, it holds 20 percent of its population, making it one of the most densely populated regions in the world. As Bangladesh's President H. M. Ershad said in his inaugural address at the first ever South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit of the seven states at Dhaka in December 1985, "Nowhere in the developing world as in South Asia is to be found such depths of poverty and human misery co-existing with immense physical and human resources. . . ." <sup>2</sup>

High population density and low per capita income are the main reasons for the region's plight. Summarizing the root of the region's problem, King Jigme Singye Wangchuk of Bhutan said at the SAARC Summit at Dhaka in December 1985,

We have one billion people with a per capita income of less than one tenth of the world's average. While the rate of economic growth is low as against a high rate of population increase, nearly half of our people live in absolute poverty.<sup>3</sup>

Demographers calculate that at the present average rate of growth of at least 2.2 percent per year, the population of regional giant India will surpass the one billion mark early in the next century, and will exceed the population of China soon after. It is believed that while China will have stabilized population growth at 1.2 billion, the population of South Asia will still be growing. Given the higher rates of population growth in Pakistan and Bangladesh, which already have each reached the 100 million mark, South Asia could well account for over a quarter of the world's population by the year 2020.<sup>4</sup>

In terms of commerce alone South Asia's location is of vital importance, sitting as it is athwart the world's vital marine lanes, linking East Asia with the Middle East. As the next door neighbors of China the region assumes further importance, politically and commercially. Not only is China a major power, it is also the largest market in the world.

Most of the South Asian countries are multireligious, multiracial and multilingual, with religions, races and languages cutting across international frontiers. But these similarities, instead of operating as positive factors, have become causes of dissension and even hostility. Domestic political developments often have an impact across borders. Any major Hindu-Muslim riot in Hindu majority India arouses anti-Indian hostility in Muslim majority

Pakistan and, in a far lower key, in the other Muslim majority state, Bangladesh.

The usual initial reaction of each government to any domestic development in a neighboring country impinging upon ethnic, linguistic or cultural links is to pretend that it is not affected by what is happening elsewhere. This attitude often changes fast under pressure of domestic political opinion or because of political opportunism or a mix of both. Inevitably, any official reaction to a neighbor's domestic political events collides resoundingly with a strong sense of nationhood, pride and self-respect. When the reaction is from India, it arouses grave apprehensions and strong suspicions of New Delhi's long-term intentions. All seven South Asian states have always agreed on one thing--that mutual distrust is the bane of their mutual relations.<sup>5</sup>

Despite mutual suspicions, however each South Asian country is aware of what multilateral institutional cooperation has achieved in other regions. The birth of The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on the eastern flank and the subsequent emergence of the Gulf Cooperation Council to the west together with friendly but quiet pressure from aid-giving Western sources and the need to counter the intermittently touted Soviet-sponsored Asian Security Plan, made South Asia realize the absurdity of lack of regional cooperation. Judging the time right, Bangladesh took the initiative and on May 1980 proposed formation of SAARC and sent special emissaries to the other six capitals in the region.<sup>6</sup>

The association became a reality later only because of Bangladesh's persistence and its initial success in persuading the other nations of the desirability and feasibility of regional cooperation. The first summit of SAARC was held at Dhaka the capital city of Bangladesh, in December 1985,

under the chairmanship of the president of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Hussain Mohammad Ershad.

The aim of SAARC is defined as strengthening of "Cooperation among the seven countries in the international forums on matters of common interest" and enhancing "mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems." Besides, the SAARC is "to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia" and also "to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, cultural, technical and scientific fields."<sup>7</sup>

The pivotal need for a political understanding to achieve a meaningful breakthrough in the SAARC is accepted by all of India's neighbors. As Bhutan's King Wangchuk argued at the 1985 Dhaka Summit,

It may neither be desirable nor possible to limit discussions in our meetings to issues of nonpolitical nature, for the political climate of our region will undoubtedly cast a long shadow over our deliberations. In the geographical realities of our region it would be unrealistic to ignore the primacy of the political factor, as in the final analysis it will be the political environments of the region which will determine the shape and scope of regional cooperation in South Asia. The main obstacle is not only to overcome the psychological and emotional barriers of the past but also the fears, and apprehensions of the present.<sup>8</sup>

Echoing similar sentiments, President Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan argued that "Cooperation could be accelerated by concurrent action in the political field." Maldives's President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom believed, "the SAARC could play a major role in the preservation of peace and security among its member states," and Sri Lanka's President Junius Jayewardene, remarked, that "there could be no successful regional cooperation without a mutual confidence and trust, and India can by deeds and words create the confidence among us so necessary to make a beginning."<sup>9</sup>

Prior to the summit the foreign ministers deliberately left out trade and industry to overcome some members'--specially Pakistan's--fears of India's vast and expanding economy. To neutralize India's own fear of its neighbors ganging up on it on any issue, it is specified that each of the seven member states has a veto at every level and on every decision. Thus, all decisions are to be arrived at in SAARC only through unanimity. Further, it is explicitly required that bilateral and contentious issues will be excluded from all deliberations. This is to reassure India further that SAARC will not be a forum to embarrass it on issues such as the Indo-Bangladesh river waters dispute, Indo-Nepalese trade problems, the Indo-Pakistan problem on Kashmir, Indo-Sri Lanka's issue on Tamil separatism or Bhutan's desire to be free of the treaty obligation that India guide it in foreign affairs.<sup>10</sup>

The optimists argued that to use political relations and cooperation in economic, social and cultural matters cannot be compartmentalized indefinitely and that political friendship has to reinforce that cooperation if the SAARC is not only to achieve its full potential but also avoid early death.<sup>11</sup>

#### India

Leadership of the Congress (I) and the nation fell to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi when Mrs. Indira Gandhi was assassinated on October 31, 1984. The young Prime Minister inherited numerous problems stemming from the growth of communal violence, demands for independent states, and the demands of regional parties that the central government cede more authority to the states.

#### Trouble in Northeastern States of India

The turmoil in northeast India is a complex one with many variables and factors interacting with one another. The region is composed of 7 states of Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh.



The northeast states are connected to the Indian mainland by a narrow and vulnerable "Silliguri Corridor" wedged between Chinese territory in the north and Bangladesh in the south. At one point the Silliguri Corridor is less than 15 miles wide lying between Bangladesh and Nepal. The region with a total population of 25 million, borders with China, Burma, Bhutan and Bangladesh. The terrain is very difficult and inaccessible, undulated with hills, covered with primary and secondary jungles and is considered to be the ideal ground for breeding insurgency. The location of these states makes it a strategically important region and figures prominently in Indian geopolitical designs.

The Northeast States and territories are heterogeneous in terms of language, culture, ethnicity and tribalism, giving rise to deep centrifugal forces. It also is in this landlocked area where Sino-Indian border problems are most severe. Moreover, the strategic location of Bangladesh has aggravated the geopolitical isolation of northeast from the rest of India.

#### Assam

Assam is bounded by Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Bangladesh, Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland, West Bengal and Bhutan. This location is also along the vulnerable "Silliguri Corridor" enhancing its importance both from strategic as well as from a political point of view.

Although the Assamese movement against the Bengalis has been continuing since the British days, the recent troubles started in the wake of the electoral rolls prepared by the Indian Election Commission in October 1979 for January 1980 elections where only three seats were contested and all went to Congress (I). The movement is being conducted by All Assam Students Union (AASU) whose president is Mr. Protulla Mahanta and All Assam Gono Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) composed of such regional parties as the Purbanchaliya Lok

Parishad, the Assam Jatiyabadi Dol, and the Assam Sahitya Shaba. The movement has also gained full support of the members from All Assam Teachers Union. The movement has grown and developed by capitalizing on the fear of the Assamese speaking people that they might be outnumbered by the outsiders and thereby lose their culture and ethnic identity. Therefore, the student organizations, backed by the above parties, opposed the inclusion of the Bengalis, whom they call foreigners, into the voter list. They also demanded their detection and deportation from Assam.<sup>12</sup>

However, rather than direct talks with the leaders of AASU, AAGSP, etc., the Indian government has opted for revision of voter lists, opened a number of checkpoints along Assam-Bangladesh borders to prevent so-called infiltration, issued identity cards to the Assamese citizens, imposed curfew along 160 km Assam-Bangladesh border, erected barbed wire and proposed to resettle some of the undesired population to other states of India. India, also agreed to expel anyone who entered Assam after 1971; but the Assamese leaders demanded that the base year be 1951. However, even with all the above measures the situation has not improved as expected.

Presently, the movement of the ethnic tribals has taken different dimensions; starting with strikes, lockouts and picketing, increasing to terrorism, insurgency and open guerrilla warfare. Their objectives range from a destiny outside the Indian Union to expulsion of all settlers from Assam, in order to establish an identity of their own in the world.

#### Mizoram

Mizoram has always been the most neglected Union territory in northeast India. No development plans were made nor was economic development a priority objective. Under these circumstances, a severe famine occurred in 1959, where the Indian bureaucrats showed complete indifference. Lal Denga set up the

Mizoram National Famine Front (MNFF) and organized the relief measures. In fact, this MNFF later on became Mizo National Front (MNF). Lal Denga, the leader of MNF, formed his shadow government in 1965. The Mizos declared independence of Mizoram in 1966 and initiated widespread insurgency and violence in Mizoram.<sup>13</sup>

However, after ten years of intermittent talks with the leaders of the outlawed MNF, the Indian government signed an agreement with Mr. Lal Denga on 10 July 1987 to end the insurgency. Statehood of Mizoram (which was administered directly by New Delhi) and special protection for the Mizos' identity were among the conditions for ending the insurgency. Pending elections, Lal Denga became the Chief Minister of a coalition government which includes the Congress Party.<sup>14</sup>

The granting of statehood to Mizoram has already strengthened demands from Arunchal Pradesh (bordering China) for a similar status. Concessions to the Mizos have drawn demands for similar protection for the hill people of Meghalaya. It is feared that the Mizoram agreement will not only bring on new demands, but may also encourage ethnic insurgencies in Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura.<sup>15</sup>

### Nagaland

It was in 1947 that Nagaland became a part of India by virtue of its being a non-Muslim area, under Assam Province. There is a serious boundary dispute between the states of Assam and Nagaland over claims and counter-claims on each other's territory.

Immediately after the independence of India the Naga National Council, which was formed to foster the welfare and social aspirations of the Nagas, submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Jawharlal Nehru asking for the autonomy of the Naga Hill with due safeguards for the interest of the Nagas.

Mr. Nehru instructed the Governor of Assam to hold negotiations with Naga leaders which resulted in the signing of a nine-point agreement. But the ninth point of the agreement later proved to be the main controversy. The point stated that,

The Governor of Assam as the agent of the government of the Indian Union will have a special responsibility for a period of ten years to ensure the due observance of this agreement and at the end of this period the Naga National Council will be asked whether they require the above agreement to be extended for a further period, or a new agreement regarding the future of the Naga people arrived at.

Phizo and his followers explained that they had the right to ask for independence after the expiry of the ten year period while the Indian Government insisted that it was responsible for allowing any required administrative re-arrangement of the area.<sup>16</sup>

Zapu Angani Phizo, who had by then established himself as the most popular leader of Nagaland, accused the government of India of violating the terms of the nine-point agreement. In 1951, he organized a plebiscite on the issue of independence for the Nagas. He later claimed that 99 percent of the people had voted for an independent Naga State. The Indian Government termed the claim as absurd but indirectly conceded to the fact that Phizo had mobilized the majority of the Naga people to his side.<sup>17</sup>

Initially, Phizo's movement for independence was peaceful and it continued until 1953-54 when, in 1954 the agitation turned into widespread insurgency and violence in Nagaland. In March 1956, Naga established a "Naga Federal Government" and declared Nagaland to be a sovereign republic. Activity of rebel Nagas was at its peak between 1956 to 1964.

Besides intensifying the Army's involvement to contain the Nagas, the Indian Government took a number of steps to appease the less militant Nagas. To give the Nagas autonomy, the Indian Government in 1963 enacted new

legislation--the State of Nagaland Act, and associated constitutional amendments--establishing the State of Nagaland. The Naga People's Convention, an Association formed by Liberal Nagas, accepted the creation of Nagaland as a State. But the rebel Nagas refused to accept the State status of Naga territory.<sup>18</sup>

The underground Nagas continued to fight the government of India until November 1975 when one section of them signed a peace agreement with the government in Shillong. Under the peace agreement, they surrendered their arms and renounced the demand for an independent Nagaland. But another faction, led by T Muivah with his followers, rejected the agreement. Now the security forces in Nagaland are very strong and Muivah's faction is not free from internal squabbles.

#### Tripura

In Tripura, there is full-scale insurgency undertaken by the Tribal National Volunteers (TNV); hatred between tribals and migrant Bengali Hindus; and Communal riot between the Hindus and Muslims.

#### Origin of the Problem in Tripura

The passing of the autonomous District Council bill on 26 March 1979 by the State Assembly enraged the immigrant Bengali Hindus against the State Government of Mr. Nripen Chakravarty. According to this bill, the autonomous District Councils, will compromise more than 3/4th of Tripura and will go to tribals; thus only 1/4th will be left for 139 million Bengali Hindus, who are opposing this bill tooth and nail and have united under the banner of Amra Bangali Organization, an off-shoot of Anand Marg.<sup>19</sup> Tripura State Chief Minister Mr. Nripen Chakraborty of the Communist Party (Marxism) said on 10 January 1988 that 1,000 commandos of the paramilitary Assam Rifles arrived in

the state as part of an agreement with New Delhi to wipe out the guerrillas.<sup>20</sup> The Assam Rifles Battalion, specially trained in jungle warfare, has been sent from neighboring Mizoram state to tackle the Tribal National Volunteer (TNV), in the south of Tripura. The insurgents killed about 10 people in December 1987.<sup>21</sup> About 15,000 paramilitary troops are already in Tripura, where the TNV has been battling for the past eight years for a homeland for tribals.<sup>22</sup>

### Manipur and Meitei Insurgency

The Meitei insurgency in Manipur is a relatively new one. When the activities of Nagas and Mizos were at their peak, the Meiteis were being doubted by the former's as New Delhi's agent. The reason was that while the Nagas and Mizos were mostly christians the Meiteis were vaisnavite Hindus. But the Meiteis were not given any privilege by New Delhi as it tried to win over the secessionist tribes by neglecting the Hindus. The Meiteis, thus disillusioned, began their search for a new identity. The People's Liberation Army of the Meiteis is responsible for the present insurgency. Since June 1978, they have become more violent and have undertaken many operations against the law enforcing agencies.

At the initial stage the Meitei's demand was concentrated on the extension of their territories and scaring away the outsiders by raising the slogan of "Manipur for the Meiteis." Now the Meiteis have raised their demand for secession and an independent Meitei State comprising some areas of the Kabaw Valley of Burma and a few slices of Nagaland where some "Meitei" people live.<sup>23</sup>

### Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh

There has always been a traditional resentment of the tribals against the non-tribals who settled in these states from outside. The present problem at Meghalaya in fact started in Shillong in October 1979 where a communal riot erupted, following an ultimatum to non-tribals to leave Meghalaya. Like all other northeastern states, the locals of Arunachal Pradesh have also served notice upon the non-locals to quit the state.

About 25 years ago only Nagaland was demanding independence, but now virtually the entire northeast is in a state of instability with many forces at work.

### The China-India Border Dispute

The Nature of Sino-Indian Dispute. The British first came into direct territorial contact with Tibet during the Gurka War of 1814-16, when they annexed the Himalayan districts of Kumaon and Garwhal. Lying between the present western boundary of Nepal and the Sutlej river, these hill tracts had recently been occupied by the Gurkhas. With the defeat of the Gurkhas, the British also gave thought to the annexation of Nepal itself. But practical considerations deterred them. As Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton, who advised Lord Hastings's Government on Himalayan matters pointed out, a British occupation of Nepal would create an extremely long Sino-British border. He noted: "a frontier of seven or eight hundred miles between two powerful nations holding each other in mutual contempt seems to point at anything but peace."<sup>24</sup>

In recent years the Republic of India has likewise had to cope with the problem of a long common border with Chinese territory. In 1954, in the Sino-Indian agreement of 29 April relating to trade and other contacts between "the

Tibet Region of China" and India, the two signatories did not share Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton's pessimism. Indeed, they expressed the belief that Sino-Indian relations over the common border could be conducted with "mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence."<sup>25</sup> The ink was scarcely dry on these admirable sentiments than there began an increasingly acrimonious exchange of notes, protests, letters, and memoranda on alleged violations by both sides of the Sino-Indian border. Of so little value have been the pious phrases of the Panch Shila, the five elements of peaceful coexistence enumerated in the 1954 agreement, that by November 1962 a massive Chinese army was on the march towards the Indian plains and the Indian Republic was suffering the worst military disaster of its short life, a debacle to be compared, perhaps, to the British retreat from Kabul in the winter of 1841-2.

India is not the only state with a common border with China; and much of the interest and historical significance of the present Sino-Indian boundary question lies in the way in which it has differed in its development from the boundary questions between China and her other neighbors. Since 1960 China has settled her long and complicated boundaries with Nepal and Burma; and in late 1962 and early 1963 she arrived at peaceful boundary agreements with Mongolia and Pakistan, at least in principle if not in the shape of final signed and ratified instruments.<sup>26</sup> The boundary between the eastern part of Sinkiang and Russia was delimited in 1884. The boundary between the Indian-protected state of Sikkim and Tibet was delimited in 1890, and subsequently not very successful attempts were made at joint demarcation: at all events, the Chinese at present seem prepared to accept the Sikkim-Tibet boundary as it stands. Why, then, this border dispute between China and India?

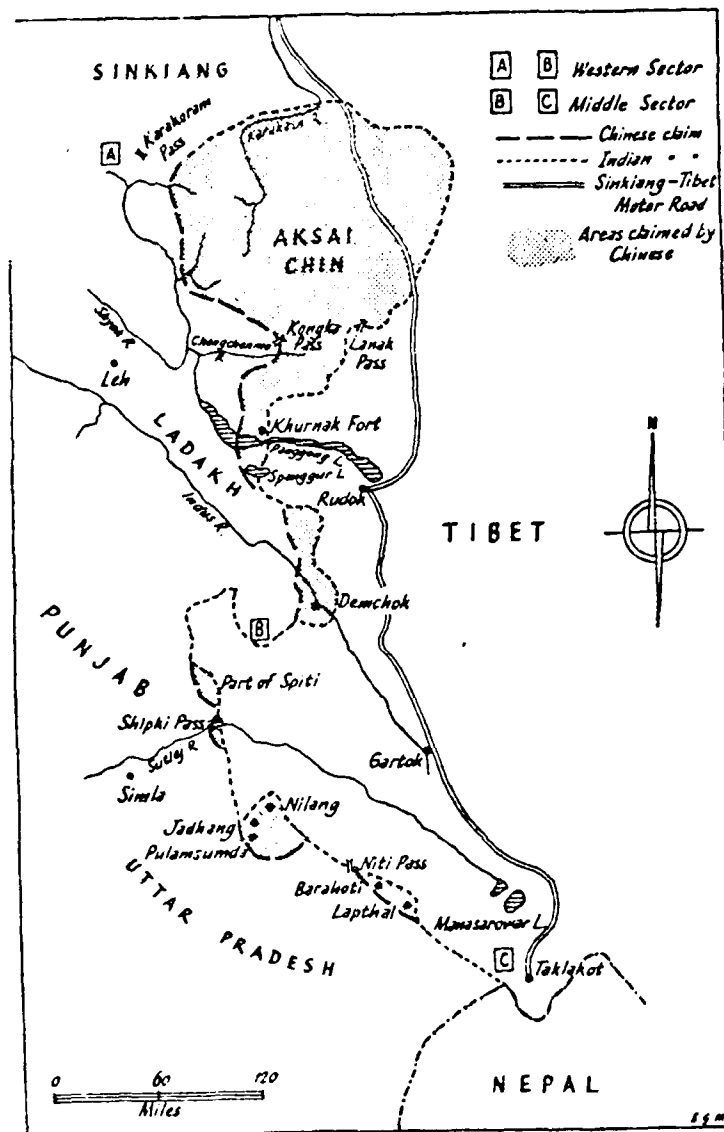


The present Sino-Indian dispute, it is worth noting in conclusion, is the product of a situation which was not in many respects created by the present disputants. The boundary between India and Chinese Turkestan and Tibet was formed under regimes which no longer rule. The China of the Manchus and the Republic has gone from the mainland, and its forlorn remnant on Formosa is not likely in the foreseeable future to have a direct interest in Central Asian issues. The British have left India. The Sino-Indian border as it stands today, however, was very much the product of Manchu and Chinese Republican policy on the one hand, and of British policy on the other. The post-imperialist Indian Republic and the Chinese People's Republic are, in effect, trying to solve a problem which their imperialist predecessors found either insoluble or undesirable to solve.

The present dispute involves more than 2,000 miles of boundary. For convenience of discussion this conflict has been divided up into three sectors; the Western, Middle, and Eastern Sectors. The Western Sector is the boundary between Kashmir and Sinkiang and Tibet. It starts at the Karakoram Pass in the extreme north of Kashmir, and extends to the Spiti-Tibet border just north of where the Sutlej cuts its way through the Himalayan range. The Middle Sector, much shorter in length, involves the boundary between Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh (in India) and Tibet. It runs along the crest of the Himalayas from the Sutlej to the Nepalese border. The Eastern Sector is that stretch of boundary in the Assam Himalayas between Bhutan and Burma.

#### The Western Sector

The Western Sector boundary is over 1,000 miles long, and here somewhat more than 15,000 square miles are contested (Map 1). It is hard to give precise figures for the area because the extent of Chinese claims seems to



MAP 1. THE PRESENT BOUNDARY DISPUTE, WESTERN AND MIDDLE SECTORS

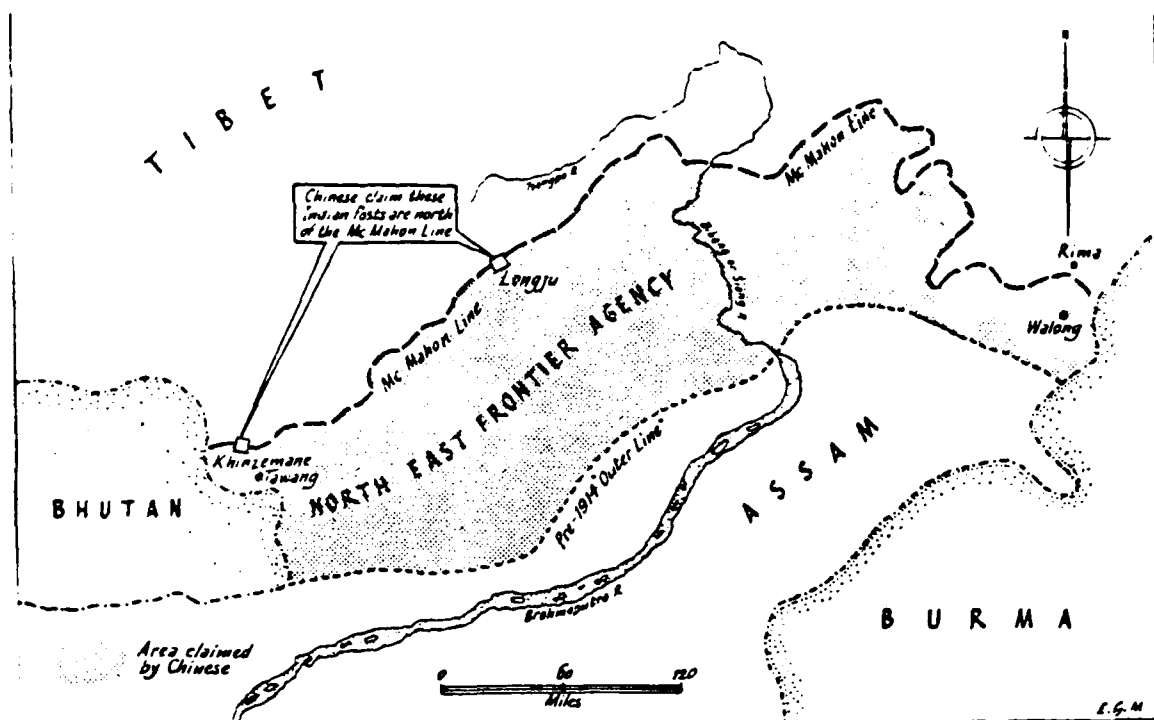
increase slightly from time to time. In this sector there are really two quite distinct disputes. The first is the issue of Aksai Chin, the desolate high wastes of the extreme northeast of Kashmir, across which the Chinese have built a motor road linking western Tibet with Sinkiang. The second is the issue of the Ladakh-Tibet boundary from the Changchenmo valley (north of the Panggong lake) to the region of Spiti where East Punjab has a common border with Tibet. The bulk of the contested area lies in the Aksai Chin region. South of the Panggong lake, there are a number of contested points, near Chushul and at Demchok on the Indus for example. The Changchenmo serves as a connecting region between the Chinese claims in Aksai Chin and those south of Panggong lake.<sup>27</sup>

#### The Middle Sector

The Middle Sector disputed boundary is about 400 miles long, and on this there are several disputed points, in Spiti, at Bara Hoti, in the Nilang region, and near the Shipki Pass (Map 1). The total contested area is not very great, perhaps under 200 square miles. The disputes here were the first to receive wide notice and they are of far less gravity than those on the other two sectors.<sup>28</sup>

#### The Eastern Sector

The Eastern Sector boundary which India claims is the McMahon Line, follows the crest of the Assam Himalaya between Bhutan and Burma over a length of slightly more than 700 miles (Map 2). China denies the validity of this alignment, and claims a quite different boundary, running along the foot of the Himalayan range. The territory between the two lines is now referred to in India as the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA), and it is about 32,000 square miles in area. There are two distinct disputes in this sector. On the



MAP 2. THE PRESENT BOUNDARY DISPUTE, EAST SECTOR

one hand the Chinese and Indians contest possessions of the whole of Himalayan NEFA, and on the other, there are some arguments, to the north of Tawang and in the region of Longju, where the Subansiri river enters Tibet, as to exactly where the McMahon Line, which the Chinese always call "illegal," runs. The Chinese say that the Indians have established posts at a number of points north of the "illegal" McMahon Line.<sup>29</sup>

#### Claims and Counterclaims

For the entire length of the disputed boundary the Chinese say that there has been no valid definition in the past, and that the entire alignment requires negotiation. The McMahon Line, and the treaties and engagements which formalized it in 1914, are, the Chinese say, invalid, illegal, and the result of imperialist trickery. On the Middle and Western Sectors, the Chinese add, no attempt at legal definition has been made at all. They then

go on to argue that from their evidence, maps, Chinese and Tibetan administrative records, travel accounts, and the like, there can be no doubt that the Chinese alignment is the correct one, a contention which the Indian side has rejected.<sup>30</sup>

The Indian side has maintained that the entire length of the disputed Sino-Indian boundary has been defined by treaty, tradition, and administrative usage. The Western Sector, they state, was defined by a Tibet-Ladakh agreement of 1684, confirmed by a Dogra-Ladakh engagement of 1842 which, in turn, was affirmed by an Anglo-Chinese exchange of notes in 1846-7. Indian possession of Aksai Chin was further confirmed by a British note to the Chinese Government in 1899. The Middle Sector, while not the subject of any major treaty, had yet been under the administration of states on the Indian side of the boundary since at least the seventeenth century. The Eastern Sector, say the Indians, was defined by a valid exchange of notes between British India and Tibet on 24-25 March 1914. These were confirmed in the Simla Convention, initialed by a Chinese plenipotentiary on 27 April 1914. The resultant McMahon Line, named after the chief British delegate to the Simla Conference of 1913-14, was no new boundary, however.<sup>31</sup> The claims and counterclaims, however, supply the language of the dispute, whatever its real substance may be. The dispute has been largely conducted on the basis of historical material. What happened in 1914 at the Simla Conference? What was the true story of the Dogra-Tibet engagement of 1842? These questions, and a large number like them, have filled hundreds of pages of Indian and Chinese official publications. But the dispute is yet to be solved.

#### Sikh and the Khalistan Movement

One of the most serious and current problems is in Punjab where some Sikhs have agitated for a separate Sikh State, "Khalistan." The June 1984

deployment of the Indian army into Punjab against armed Sikh militants barricaded in the Golden Temple at Amritsar followed months of violence in Punjab. Mrs. Gandhi's assassins (Sikh members of her bodyguard) claimed this act was in revenge for the attack on the Golden Temple. The assassination and the ensuing anti-Sikh violence in New Delhi and some other cities of northern India have further complicated government efforts to resolve the Punjab situation in a manner that preserves the integrity of Indian federalism.<sup>32</sup>

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had promised an early solution to the problem of calls for autonomy by militant groups within the Sikh dominated state of Punjab. He took the initiative for this by releasing moderate Sikh leader Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and his aides, who had been taken into protective custody in June 1984 during Operation "Blue Star," aimed at ending the use of the Golden Temple and other Sikh temples as militant sanctuaries. But once out of prison, Longowal found that extremism had gained ground and terrorism new recruits in the political vacuum that followed operation Blue Star. The extremists forced a split in the Akali Dal party he headed. The breakaway group, styling itself the United Akali Dal (UAD) projected as its leader 82 year old Baba Joginder Singh, father of Sikh rebel leader Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who was killed during operation Blue Star. Gandhi's strategy was to support the moderates led by Longowal and thereby isolate the extremists to create the climate for a settlement of Sikh demands.<sup>33</sup> But the militants who had regrouped went violent to thwart such a solution. Gandhi persuaded parliament and declared that while he would take a flexible approach to the Punjab problem at political level, terrorism would be put down firmly.

After secret negotiations, Gandhi and Longowal reached an agreement on the Sikh demands on 24 July 1985. The more extreme Punjab factions denounced

it as a sellout. Gandhi called elections in Punjab for 22 September 1986 to restore the political processes in the state which had been brought under direct New Delhi rule in October 1983 due to the disturbed conditions there. Longowal, whose party was trying to sell the accord to the people of Punjab (62 percent of them Sikh) was assassinated on 20 August 1986, but the elections went ahead--three days late, but relatively peacefully in what the local press described as a triumph of democracy over terrorism. The moderate Akali Dal won by a landslide, a result which was no disappointment to Gandhi, who was able to hand over the problems of Punjab to an opposition grouping which poses no national electoral threat.<sup>34</sup>

The Sikh-religion majority state of Punjab continued to be Mr. Gandhi's biggest challenge. The victory of the moderate Sikh Akali Dal party in the polls did not end the secessionist challenge. A vital part of the accord with moderate Sikh leader Sant Harchand Singh Longowal in July 1985, namely, transfer of the city of Chandigarh (now directly administered by New Delhi) to Punjab--did not take place as scheduled in January 1986. The transfer was held up because there was no agreement on the area from Punjab to be transferred to Haryana state (which also claims Chandigarh) by way of compensation. Sikh terrorists stepped up their campaign of violence, and an exodus of Hindus was reported from Punjab. This terrorist activity reached a high point in August 1987 with the assassination at Pune of General A. S. Vaidya, who was India's army chief when Mrs. Gandhi ordered military action in 1984 to clear the Golden Temple of terrorists using it as a sanctuary. Sikh terrorism was extending beyond Punjab.<sup>35</sup>

#### Gurkha National Liberation Front

The chief Minister of the tiny Himalayan state of Sikkim, Nar Bahadur Bhandari, served a one year ultimatum on New Delhi over his three demands.

One of his demands is constitutional recognition for Nepali, spoken by most Sikkimese and, for all intents and purposes, the state's official language as one of India's national languages.<sup>36</sup>

The demand for recognition of Nepali also came from the Nepali-speaking Indians living in the strategic area between Bhutan, China, Nepal and the state of West Bengal. A successful three day strike in the hill district of Darjeeling was called by the Gurkha National Liberation Front (GNLF). The demand goes beyond the language issue. The GNLF wants a separate Nepali-speaking state comprising the Darjeeling area.<sup>37</sup> The movement raised fears of increasing turmoil in the region. The West Bengal government says the GNLF is a secessionist organization; but Subhas Gheising, head of the GNLF says, the Nepalese want to live in India, but not as second class citizens.<sup>38</sup>

Resentment among Nepalese in Darjeeling was fueled by the deportation of Nepali-speaking settlers in the northeastern hill state of Meghalaya. The West Bengal government thinks the GNLF movement has drawn strength from the concessions New Delhi made to other ethnic groups in northeast India. These include the creation of Meghalaya, and the accord with the Mizo ethnic leader Mr. Lal Denga in Mizoram, which has had a secessionist insurgency since 1966.<sup>39</sup>

As per Press Trust of India (PTI) dated 10 Jan 88, Gurkha militant chief Subhas Gheising is reportedly in eastern Nepal, hesitating to return to his base in Darjeeling following hardline protests against his leadership of the homeland campaign.<sup>40</sup> The news agency quoted intelligence sources in Darjeeling on 8 Jan 88 as saying that Mr. Gheising went to Nepal after talks with the federal government in New Delhi.<sup>41</sup>

Mr. Gheising, a former Indian army soldier, was said to be meeting GNLF cadres who have fled into Nepal after a police crackdown in Darjeeling.



Hundreds of GNLF supporters, staged the first protests against Mr. Gheising in Darjeeling district on a show of growing militancy in the campaign for a separate state within India. Also about 25,000 Gurkhas have reportedly fled away into neighboring Sikkim state to escape the police crackdown.<sup>42</sup>

### Sri Lanka

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka is a pear-shaped island in the Indian Ocean. It is southeast of India, from which it is separated at the closest point by only 29 kilometers (18 mi.). About 74 percent of the population are Sinhalese, and 18 percent are Tamil, people of South Indian origins. Roughly two-thirds of the Tamils are "Ceylon Tamils," who have lived in Sri Lanka for many centuries. The others are "Indian Tamils," whose forebearers were brought from India in the late 19th century to work for the tea and rubber plantations. The Ceylon Tamils enjoy full voting rights. Most Indian Tamils, however, were disenfranchised in Sri Lanka by legislation passed in 1948. Because India also refused to recognize them as citizens, many Indian Tamils are stateless. A 1964 agreement with India provided for repatriation of some to India and the granting of Sri Lankan citizenship to others, on a 60-40 ratio. That agreement has expired, but the government has announced its intention to grant citizenship to the remaining stateless Tamils.<sup>43</sup>

Ceylon Tamils live mainly in the north and east and are prominent in entrepreneurial activities in the cities and have held prominent public service positions throughout the island. Since the 1970's, a segment of the northern Tamils have demanded more autonomy, some calling for a separate state. Most Indian Tamils still cluster in the central tea estates region. In 1972, the two major Ceylon Tamil political parties joined to form the Tamil United Front (TUF) to better protect Tamil interests, promote the use of Tamil

as an official language, and resolve specific Tamil grievances such as discrimination in public employment, university entrance, and land settlement allocations. The TUF eventually espoused the establishment of a separate Tamil State (Tamil Eelam), principally in the areas of the northern and eastern provinces of the island heavily populated by Tamils, and the party later changed its name to Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF).<sup>44</sup>

Sri Lanka's most difficult domestic problem, inherited by the UNP from its predecessor governments, is posed by the grievances and aspirations of the minority Tamil community. Since the early 1970's militant Tamil youths, disgruntled with the inability of the traditional political leaders of their community to secure what they and other Tamils regard as their legitimate political and economic rights within a united Sri Lanka, have sought through violent means to create a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka's Northern and Eastern Provinces where Tamils predominate. The militants, consisting of a half-dozen major groups and many other smaller ones commonly referred to as "Tamil tigers," have grown steadily in strength since severe communal rioting occurred in Colombo and elsewhere in Sinhalese-majority areas in July 1983. They continue to use terrorist tactics--assassinations of government officials, politicians associated with the government, and alleged informants--in pursuit of their objectives but have also demonstrated a growing capacity to mount quasi-military operations against hard targets such as police stations and government military facilities.<sup>45</sup>

Since July 1983, attacks by Tamil militants have grown in frequency and severity; they also have become more widespread geographically. By mid-1985, violence had become endemic throughout the northern one-third of the country and had affected large parts of the east as well. The situation was further complicated in April 1985, with the emergence of Tamil-Muslim conflict in the

Eastern Province. Riots there resulted in a number of deaths, more than 40,000 being made at least temporarily homeless, and widespread property damage. Sri Lanka's armed forces which never before had faced a prolonged combat situation, were unprepared for dealing with the task of putting down an incipient, communally based insurgency. Acts of indiscipline and of revenge taken against the civilian population in Tamil areas by the security forces have seriously exacerbated the problem.<sup>46</sup>

President Junius Jayewardene publicly indicated his willingness to grant a package of devolution enabling a substantial degree of regional autonomy. However, he made it very clear that the creation of a separate Tamil state, to which the vast majority of Sri Lanka's population was strongly opposed, was out of the question.<sup>47</sup>

Relations between Sri Lanka and India, which dominate Sri Lanka's foreign policy, improved in 1986, though Colombo did not shift from its contention that Tamil guerrillas responsible for the insurgency in the northern and eastern provinces continued to train in and stage from Tamil Nadu state in southern India. The accusations, which India has consistently denied despite independent evidence, were less strident in 1986, largely reflecting Colombo's realization that there can be no end to the problem without Indian cooperation. President Junius Jayewardene told his countrymen as much in speeches he made toward the end of the year, as he sought to pave the way for a New Delhi--brokered peace plan. The cooperation of both India and Tamil Nadu is essential to settle the problem, he stressed.<sup>48</sup>

At last an Indo-Sri Lankan peace accord was formulated (Copy attached as Annex A). However, it was rushed through in an unequal treaty and enforced by Indian muscle, but has held so far in Sri Lanka. But goodwill is sadly

lacking from both the Tamil and Sinhalese sides of the conflict which has claimed 6000 lives in a four years civil war.

With 7,000 Indian troops initially enforcing the 29 July 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan peace accord in the rebellious Tamil northern and eastern provinces, the political and military focus has shifted swiftly to the south, the majority-Sinhalese heartland.

Here, President Junius Jayewardene is having to tax all his considerable political skills to keep his cabinet in line, combat opposition Sinhalese forces as well as comforting his military commanders to implement an accord which even he evidently believes is demeaning to his tiny island republic.

But hardly anyone in the Sinhalese community, including the cabinet, is happy with the peace accord. The price Colombo is having to pay is an understanding that it will make its foreign and security policies subservient to Indian interests. Apart from the substance of the pact, it is the method by which it was reached that has riled some members of the cabinet.<sup>49</sup>

The disgruntled ministers feel that the letters granting India sway over Colombo's foreign policy were based on wrong presumptions that Sri Lanka was too pro-U.S. and was recruiting Israeli and Pakistani military support. They also complain that these arrangements amount to a Finlandization of Sri Lanka, with no reciprocal concessions by New Delhi.

Political analysts say the clauses in the letters reflected Indian fears more than the realities of Sri Lanka's links with foreign powers. By stating that the country's strategic deep-water Trincomalee harbor should not be used by foreign interests unacceptable to India, New Delhi meant the United States. But the United States denies any ambition to use the harbor as a staging post for its warships in the Indian Ocean.<sup>50</sup>

The clause referring to Sri Lanka's employment of foreign intelligence personnel meant Indian concern over Israeli and Pakistani military advisers in Colombo. However, official sources say that while there is still an Israeli interests section of the U.S. Embassy here, Israeli military advisers departed from the country two years ago. Sri Lankan troops are trained in Pakistan, but there are no Pakistani military advisers permanently based in the country.

The one agency still operating in the country is Keeny Meeny Services, comprising mainly former British SAS officers, who have trained Sri Lanka's 1,000 strong Special Task Force in the eastern province. That may have to stop, under the accord.<sup>51</sup>

Indian concern about foreign broadcasts from Sri Lanka center on Voice of America's (VOA) relay facilities near Colombo. Sri Lankan officials say the facility has no military uses and there is an understanding with the VOA that the station will only relay English-language broadcasts, and these will not contain propaganda directed against any particular country.

As Jayewardene said in a televised speech on 6 August, the main threat to the country has shifted quickly from the Tamil areas to "terrorism in the south." By that he meant the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), an underground Sinhalese militant group which espouses ethnic chauvinism and Marxism and which has been successful in recruiting young students, Buddhist monks and is even officially estimated to have up to five percent support among young troopers in the armed forces.<sup>52</sup> The JVP has jumped on the Sinhalese backlash against the accord for its own goal of destabilizing the government, and is accused by the police of seizing 141 guns during the postaccord period alone to add to its terrorist arsenal.

On top of this threat, Jayewardene must also keep an eye on the armed forces themselves. There is undoubtedly a great deal of resentment over the

accord among the ranks who have lost 900 men in the battle against the Tamil militants since 1983. The Indians, in particular, worry about the possibility of a military coup against Jayewardene.

As per "The New Nation, Dhaka, Monday 11 January 1988, New Delhi 10 Jan 1988 (AFP)," India has begun moving thousands more soldiers to Sri Lanka to beef up its troop strength in the fight against Tamil separatists to 45,000. The same news has been provided by India's best known syndicated journalist Kuldip Nayar who said, "the reinforcement would raise the total strength of Indian soldiers in the island to 45,000, or three fighting divisions." One Indian army division has about 20,000 men, but actual fighting force is about 15,000 soldiers, with the rest acting as back-up units. An Indian Defense Ministry source said, reinforcements backed by armor and artillery, were being ferried from southern India on naval ships to combat the powerful Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), but refused to comment on the massive deployment of troops, saying it was an "Operational Matter."<sup>53</sup>

The source further reveals that India's elite 54th infantry division spearheads the Indian peacekeeping force (IPKF), previously estimated at 30,000-35,000 strong which went on the offensive to disarm the LTTE on 10 October 1987 under an Indo-Sri Lanka peace accord.<sup>54</sup> New Delhi raised the IPKF strength from an initial 7,000 soldiers to almost two divisions after the LTTE refused to surrender arms. More than 2,000 Indian paramilitary forces are also on the island and the Indian navy has deployed five to six ships around northern Sri Lanka. The IPKF is also backed up by 30 helicopters; but repeatedly stresses it employs maximum restraint to minimize civilian casualties in Sri Lanka.<sup>55</sup>

V. Prabhakaran, leader of the LTTE has made it clear that he and his armed followers are a reluctant party to the Colomb-New Delhi peace accord.

It is doubtful whether all the estimated 5,000 Tamil militants' weapons will be handed over to Indian troops in near future, in which case Colombo expects the Indian soldiers to go out and get them.<sup>56</sup> An interesting situation has come up in Sri Lanka, where the Indians are fighting against the Tamil militants who were trained and armed by them.

The Tigers, as the LTTE fighters are commonly called, have built a reputation in the peninsula as fighters who are accustomed to getting their way at gun-point. As toothless Tigers, they will have to establish political dominance not only over rival militant groups, but also counter the forces of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), a moderate political party. It is doubtful that the Tamil militants will so easily hand over their weapons to the Indian troops.

#### Pakistan

Afghan Refugee Problem. The April 1978 coup in Afghanistan, which installed a pro-Soviet regime in Kabul, posed a direct threat to Pakistan's security. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and the intensified fighting it created turned the trickle of refugees fleeing into Pakistan from Afghanistan into a flood. Today, there are at least 2.5 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan, in cooperation with the world community, has undertaken a massive refugee relief effort to care for the invasion's victims. The United States has provided nearly \$500 million in humanitarian assistance, mainly through multilateral organizations.<sup>57</sup>

Soviet and Kabul regime aircraft regularly violate Pakistani airspace and have bombed and strafed refugee camps and Pakistani villages, killing and injuring Pakistani civilians as well as refugees. These attacks increased in 1985 and 1986.<sup>58</sup>

For six years the U.N. General Assembly, with increasing majorities, has voted for a Pakistani-sponsored resolution calling for the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, return of the refugees to Afghanistan, a nonaligned Afghan foreign policy, and self-determination for Afghanistan. Since 1982, Pakistan has engaged in U.N. sponsored talks aimed at resolving the Afghan conflict. Although there has been some progress in the proximity talks between Pakistan and the Kabul regime and the Soviet Union has also provided a somewhat reasonable timetable for the withdrawal of its troops, nothing can be taken as final.

Its military presence in Afghanistan has brought the Soviet union some gains. The Soviet Union now enjoys an increased capability to pressure two of its main troublesome neighbors, Iran and Pakistan; it is within 300 miles of the Arabian Sea and the whole Gulf region is within the range of its tactical aircraft; it has greater capability to intervene in the event of crisis in the region and to preempt the United States moves more speedily than before. It can not only pose a threat to the pro-U.S. feudal regimes in the Gulf region but also deny China access to the Arabian Sea through Pakistan. The Soviet military presence in Afghanistan, combined with a similar presence in Ethiopia, South Yemen and the Indian Ocean, brings the Soviet Union at par with the United States in South-West Asia and makes it acceptable not only as a balancing force but also as a co-guarantor. Indeed, any future discussion on detente must accommodate the oil needs of the Soviet Union as well as accept it as a partner for the security of oil routes.<sup>59</sup>

#### Kashmir Problem

Relations between Pakistan and India reflect centuries old Muslim-Hindu rivalries and suspicions. Although many issues divide the two countries, the most sensitive one since independence remains the status of Kashmir.



At the time of partition, Kashmir, although ruled by a Hindu maharajah, had an overwhelmingly Muslim population. When the maharajah hesitated in acceding to either Pakistan or India in 1947, some of his Muslim subjects, aided by tribesmen from Pakistan, revolted in favor of joining Pakistan. The Kashmiri ruler offered his state to India in return for military aid in crushing the revolt. Indian troops took the eastern portion of Kashmir, including its capital, Srinagar, while the western half came under Pakistani control.<sup>60</sup>

India took its dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir to the United Nations on January 1, 1948. One year later, the United Nations arranged a cease-fire along a line dividing Kashmir roughly in half but leaving the northern end of the line undemarcated and the Vale of Kashmir (with the majority of the population) under Indian control. India and Pakistan agreed to hold a U.N. supervised plebiscite to determine the state's future, but over time India proved unwilling to implement this commitment.

The years since then have witnessed a series of skirmishes along the cease-fire line. Full scale hostilities erupted in September 1965, when India alleged that Pakistani trained and supplied terrorists were operating in India controlled Kashmir. Hostilities ceased three weeks later. In January 1966, Indian and Pakistani representatives met in Tashkent, U.S.S.R., and agreed to work for a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute and of other differences separating the two countries. Kashmir, however, still remains an unsettled dispute between India and Pakistan.

Relations between India and Pakistan deteriorated further during the early 1970's as the crisis in East Pakistan grew worse, culminating in the 1971 war, which ended with the emergence of an independent Bangladesh.

## Bangladesh

As Bangladesh has no dispute with neighboring Burma (both maritime boundary and land border agreements were successfully negotiated and signed), Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives, its ties with them remained excellent. Relations with Pakistan remained friendly though outstanding issues--the repatriation of 250,000 Biharis (Muslims) who claim to be Pakistani nationals and have defied all attempts by successive Dhaka administrations to absorb them as Bangladeshis and the division of assets and liabilities between Pakistan and Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) remained--elusive goals.

Indo-Bangladesh relations have not been without strains because of the existing disputes between the two countries. A few of the major disputes are highlighted as under:

## Sharing of the Ganges Water

The Ganges, one of the major rivers of the world, originates in two head streams, the Alakahanda and the Bhagirath in the southern slope of the Himalayas. Of the two head streams the larger one is Alakananda which originates near the Garhwal-Tibet (China) border. Devaprayag is the meeting point of the Bhagirath and Alkananda where the name Ganges begin.

The 1,600 miles Ganges is an international river with its basin spread over China, Nepal, India and Bangladesh. It carries an annual flow of over 446 million acre ft. The Ganges flow is characterized by wide range of variation from an average of over two million cusec during the peak to a mere 55,000 cusec (at 75 percent availability) in the driest period at Farakka in India. Nepal is a co-basin country and contributes about 71 percent of the historic dry season flow and 41 percent of the total annual flow of the Ganges.<sup>61</sup> The dispute over the sharing of the Ganges water took a quarter of a century of negotiation at various technical and official levels and

exchange of voluminous data. It was a source of tension between India and Pakistan before the emergence of Bangladesh, and is now generating tension between India and Bangladesh.

The dispute was originated when India decided to construct a barrage, 7229 feet long, with 108 spans, at Farakka 11 miles from Indo-Bangladesh border to divert 40,000 cusec of Ganges water through the feeder canal, 40 feet deep and 150 feet wide, to Hoogly river to clear the silt in order to maintain the navigation of the river.

The total catchment area of the Ganges river above Goalundo (in Bangladesh) is about 431,200 square miles which lies in China (Tibet), Nepal, India and Bangladesh. The break-down of tributary areas is as follows:

Drainage Area

China (Tibet)	18,000 sq. miles
Nepal	54,600 sq. miles
India	332,600 sq. miles
Bangladesh	<u>26,000 sq. miles</u>

Total: 431,200 sq. miles

The total surface flow of the Ganges at Farakka, if any part of it was not used in the upstream, comes to 446.0 MAF. If the volume of present available groundwater (88 MAF) in the Ganges basin is considered, the total water potentials in the Ganges is of the order of  $(446 + 88) = 534$  MAF.62

For assessing water availability against land use it is necessary to delineate water resources against land resources in each sub-basin.

Nepal. The total cultivable area in Nepal is 17 percent of the total area of 54,672 sq. miles (141,600 sq. km.). It is estimated that about 3.21 million acres (1.3 million ha) are available for total irrigation in Nepal. The total area of completed irrigation projects and that under construction is

about 521,218 acres (210,934 ha). The area under investigation for irrigation development is about 840,881 ha.<sup>63</sup>

India. The cultivable, net sown and net irrigated areas state-wise are shown in Table I.

TABLE I  
Land Resources in the Ganges Basin, India

(In million acres)			
State	Cultivable area	Net sown area	Net irrigated area
Bihar	24.404	17.873	6.049
Delhi	0.252	0.203	0.074
Haryana	7.428	6.832	2.360
Himachal Pradesh	0.442	0.141	0.030
Madhya Pradesh	31.590	21.011	2.162
Rajasthan	20.237	13.403	2.913
U.P.	51.310	42.986	21.621
West Bengal	12.985	11.334	4.448
Total	148.657	113.783	39.657

Bangladesh. The total cultivable area in Bangladesh within the Ganges basin is about nine million acres (3.6 million ha), the one-third of this lies on the north of the Ganges and the two-thirds on the south.<sup>65</sup>

The availability of water in the Ganges basin in India is of the order of 446 MAF. The total availability of the Ganges Flows at Farakka is as follows:

o Total availability at Farakka:	372 MAF
oo Dry season flow (Nov. to May):	50 MAF
oo Wet season flow (June to Oct.):	322 MAF

o The requirement of Bangladesh of the waters of the Ganges basin by 2,000 A.D. is as follows:

oo Dry season requirement for irrigation and domestic use (Nov. to May):	15.7 MAF
oo Wet season requirement for irrigation and domestic use (June to Oct.):	8.45 MAF
oo Salinity and navigation requirement (Nov. to May):	<u>21.12 MAF</u>
Total:	43.27 MAF
Say:	43 MAF

o The stated requirement by India for the Calcutta Port is as follows:

oo For the dry season (Nov. to May):	17.36 MAF
oo For the wet season (June to Oct.):	<u>12.40 MAF</u>
Total:	29.76 MAF
Say:	30 MAF

The irrigation commission of India in 1972 estimated the requirement of India for irrigation in the Ganges basin by 2,000 A.D. is one of the order of 150 MAF against the then use of 116 MAF including the amount from the ground water sources. In 1974-75, she used 138.14 MAF (if irrigation was intensive). Requirement of Nepal for irrigation is approximately 24 MAF. The total annual requirement in the basin by 2,000 A.D. for the three countries will thus be approximately  $(150 + 24 + 43) = 217$  MAF, against the total availability of water in the basin of the order of 446 MAF.<sup>66</sup>

It is apparent that there is enough availability of water in the Ganges basin to meet the known and possible future requirements of all the co-riparian countries. However, the present dry season flow of the Ganges river is inadequate to meet the requirements of Bangladesh. The reason of

non-availability of water in Farraka is due to heavy upstream withdrawals in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, thereby creating a crisis situation on Farraka.

The situation reached its climax when India started unilateral withdrawals of the Ganges water from 1 July 1975. The resultant effects in the dry season of 1976 and 1977 was disastrous for Bangladesh. The matter had to go to the United Nations in September 1976 for an amicable settlement. In pursuance of the consensus resolution of the United Nations, negotiation started again and resulted in the Ganges Waters Agreement in November 5, 1977. However, the problem remains a problem and Bangladesh never got any benefit out of the agreement.

The Ganges system serves about 21,000 sq. miles or about 38 percent of the total area of Bangladesh in which 30 million people live. The rivers provide drinking water to the people, sustain agriculture, forestry and fishery; serve as means of transport, keep back the saline water from the Bay of Bengal and play a dominant role in the ecology of the region.

#### South Talpatti and Purbasha Islands

South Talpatti and Purbasha are newly emerged islands at the estuary of river Hariabhanga in Bangladesh, and with all the available evidence, these two islands belong to Bangladesh. But to everybody's surprise, India unreasonably claimed these islands to be their territory and named them New Moore Island. The controversy about the ownership created by India generated heat in Bangladesh in May 1981 and is still continuing.

The government of Bangladesh claimed that it had data to prove that the two islands Purbasha and South Talpatti belonged to it and proposed for a joint survey of the two newly emerged islands.<sup>67</sup> The issue had earlier been discussed when P.V. Narasimha Rao of India visited Dhaka in the second week of

August 1980. At that time both sides agreed to exchange additional information to settle the question peacefully.<sup>68</sup> Neither was information supplied to Bangladesh nor did India accept a joint survey of the islands.

#### Border Problems

The issue of the delineation of both the land and maritime boundaries as per the Delhi Agreement of 1974 between the two countries are still to be solved. Intensive negotiations had been held in 1974, 1975 and 1978 between India and Bangladesh, at official as well as ministerial levels.<sup>69</sup> It was agreed on a formula that the demarcation to be done in a manner which should be equitable to India and Bangladesh and safeguard the interests of both countries.<sup>70</sup> However, the issue of delineation remains a problem and a source of tension between the two countries as India never acted on the agreement.

#### Other Problems

- o New Delhi's decision to erect barbed wire fencing along the Indo-Bangladesh border on the plea to prevent so called infiltration.<sup>71</sup>

- o New Delhi's failure after repeated assurances to lease out a strip of land to Bangladesh, known as "Teen Bigha Corridor" (about 100 yards in length), to link two enclaves (Dahogram and Angorpota) with Bangladesh proper.<sup>72</sup>

- o Frequently undertaking border skirmishes by Border Security Force (BSF) and other paramilitary forces of India.

- o Last but not the least, encouraging the Chakma tribals, to undertake insurgency operations in Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh.

## Other Problems of South Asian Countries

Intra-Regional Differences. The core countries of South Asia are indistinguishable from one another, because of their geographical compactness, common legacy of common rules finding expression in political and legal systems and administrative institutions, and the overlapping of religions and languages. But they have not necessarily led to any sentiment of unity in the region. The British rule acted as both an unifying and a divisive factor. The British policy of "Divide and Rule" laid the seeds of differences between the Hindus and the Muslims over the Two Nation Theory, between Sri Lanka and India over the nationality of Tamilian plantation workers. In fact, the existence of different religious, racial and linguistic groups in itself has led to various difficulties in the intra-regional and inter-state relationships. The Tamils living in Sri Lanka, the Hindus in Bangladesh, the Biharis in Nepal, the Nepalis in India--all contribute to the intra-regional tensions.

### Religion.

o Major religious groups are scattered all over South Asia. This has a significant bearing on the relationships between India and the small states in the region. Hindus constitute 83 percent of the population in India, 12 percent in Bangladesh, 90 percent in Nepal, 18 percent in Sri Lanka, and 20 percent in Bhutan. Muslims form 97 percent of the population in Pakistan, 11 percent in India, 87 percent in Bangladesh, seven percent in Sri Lanka, and two percent in Nepal. Buddhists constitute 67 percent of the population in Sri Lanka, eight percent in Nepal, 80 percent in Bhutan, 0.7 percent in India, and 0.6 percent in Bangladesh. The presence of number of religions, often leads to communal strife. Despite the professed commitment to secularism in the Indian political system, for instance, the actual behavior of Indians



often falls short of this ideal. Hindu-Muslim riots have been a frequent occurrence in India and have usually had a negative impact on Indo-Pakistan and to some extent Indo-Bangladesh relations.

o Communalism still remains a powerful irritant among the South Asian States. The emotive potency of the irritant is accentuated by the fact that each religious minority is in majority in the neighboring state. Religious groups have been placed in a situation of double-squeeze, wherein their co-citizens suspect their loyalty and co-religionists try to exploit their religious affinities. Thus the Hindus of India keep on worrying at the conditions in which the Hindus in Bangladesh are supposed to be living. Similarly the Muslims of Bangladesh and Pakistan worry about the frequent communal riots in India.

Language. The linguistic boundaries in South Asia do not coincide with the international boundaries. This provides a readymade excuse for the people and the government of one country to interfere in the affairs of another country on the plea of safeguarding the interests of the co-linguists. When Pakistan wanted to make Urdu the official language, there was sharp reaction amongst the East Pakistanis (now Bangladeshis) as a whole--a rare example of triumph of regionalism over religion.<sup>73</sup> Bengali spoken in Bangladesh and West Bengal and Punjabi spoken in the Punjabs of both India and Pakistan may contribute to difficulties in inter-state relationships. India is already apprehensive of possible Pakistani help to co-linguistic Sikh separatists, vis-a-vis Pakistan is apprehensive of possible Indian help to co-linguistic Sinkh nationals.

Race. Ethnic differences between regions also affects state-to-state relations. The current Tamil separatist movement in Sri Lanka, the demand for the expulsion of non-Assamese from Assam, non-tribals from Mizoram, Manipur,

Tripura, Meghalaya, Arunachal, and Nagaland, and the repatriation of Biharis from Bangladesh, who have opted for Pakistan are some of the irritants which adversely affect interstate relations in South Asia.

#### Fear of Indian Dominance

In South Asia India is the dominant country. In fact, it is also the core of the South Asian region. Most of the South Asian countries do not want to accept this fact, specially because they consider India to be the potential enemy.

Their fears are not unfounded. In terms of the usual indicators the changes in India's "power" over the past 40 years seem quite impressive. In 1947 India's defense forces was not that big. Lethal armament manufacturing capacity was almost nonexistent. By 1977, India had acquired the world's third largest army, fifth largest air force and eighth largest navy. Its indigenous armament industry was the largest among Third World non-communist states in value, volume, diversity of manufacture, and research and development facilities. Through its nuclear and space activities India has exhibited an ability--and some would say the intent--to acquire a strategic weapon and delivery system in the coming decade.

The major problem for each of the smaller South Asian states is their relationship with India. These countries have outstanding issues with India, which India seeks to solve through bilateral means. Bilateralism, on the other hand, is considered by the smaller states as a form of Indian hegemonism in the region. Thus each of these states, except Bhutan, have sought to use external powers as counterbalances to India.

### Seeking Alliances

Since the Soviet Union is already allied with India by a treaty of friendship signed in 1971 and the United States is only willing to involve itself in a limited manner with any international conflict, the only country that remains is China. China has a substantial interest in South Asia: it is an immediate neighbor and there remains the Sino-Indian border conflict. Hence, the smaller states of South Asia have developed a close relations with China in order to balance India. They hope this will discourage India from committing any act of aggression against them, or if such an aggression does occur, the China factor will help facilitate a disengagement. India is trying hard to catch up with China, dominate the Indian Ocean, be a major power and dominate South and Southeast Asia.

### National Security and Economic Development

The small states of South Asia, like most other states, seek two interrelated objectives; national security and economic development. These countries have constraints on defense, resulting from low productivity, relative smallness of armed forces including weapons and equipment, heavy dependence on foreign military supplies and not least is the burden of ever increasing population. Threat perceptions on national security are forcing these countries to spend a sizeable percentage of their GNP on defense, which in turn retards their pace of economic development. Here, thousands of people are fighting against poverty, yet defense spending in the region are on the increase.

### Indian Ocean

New Delhi's concern for the integrity of its sea lines of communication and island possessions gained acceptance in the early 1960's. It is at that

time that Indonesia began acquiring significant numbers of naval combatants from the soviet Union, thereby, providing reasonable evidence that Jakarta was interested in becoming a regional maritime power. This augmentation of naval security assets served as an underpinning for various Indonesian territorial aggrandizements, such as Jakarta asserting a claim to India's Nicobar Island chain. Bilateral relations worsened in 1965 when President Sukarno supported Islamabad in its war with India and dispatched naval vessels to the port of Karachi.<sup>74</sup> With the collapse of the Sukarno government in 1966, relations between New Delhi and Jakarta took on a more harmonious tone. Nevertheless, these earlier threats and lesser challenges from Burma and Thailand highlighted Indian vulnerabilities. Indian leadership sees itself as the ascendant power in the region. This condition, in part, explains the Indian arms buildup and is the underpinning of India's Indian Ocean policy.

Viewing themselves as the major players in the Indian Ocean, senior Indian Navy (IN) officers became concerned over the size and composition of their fleet. One group entertained the view that IN procurement should focus on systems suitable for employment in waters contiguous to India's coasts. The opposition advocated development of a blue-water navy. This latter faction emphasized that the impending British withdrawal from areas east of Suez would create a power vacuum, allowing New Delhi to establish itself as principal security guarantor for Indian Ocean states. Today, Indian maritime strategy is not a contentious national issue. A consensus has formed, both within and without the Indian Navy, that New Delhi should seek to attain an ascendant power position in the Indian Ocean.

#### Indian Ocean Policy: Elements

New Delhi will most likely focus on the following elements to support its Indian Ocean policy:

- o Expansion of its arms inventory, including increase in maritime force projection capabilities.

- o Promotion of commercial interests in the Indian Ocean and broadened economic ties with Indian Ocean island and littoral states.

- o Protection of the lives and property of Indian nationals (and persons of Indian descent) resident in these states.

- o Reduction of the extraregional naval units in the Indian Ocean.

- o Neutralization of Pakistani security relationships with West Asian nations.

- o Enhancement of Indian prestige and psychological factors.

- o Indian Navy ship visit.

- o Diplomatic initiative.

Expanding Arms Inventory/Maritime Force Projection. Pakistan and China form the apex of New Delhi's threat hierarchy. The Sino-Pakistani threat, in turn, has generated an Indian arms acquisition program that is out of proportion to any foreseeable threat from these states. In addition, the Indian Navy today can successfully prosecute antishipping, antisubmarine, and amphibious warfare operations. Indeed, Indian force projection capabilities provide visible evidence of Indian aspirations to achieve politico-military predominance in the Indian Ocean.

India has launched a massive naval buildup aimed at making it the dominant power in the region between the Persian Gulf and Indonesia. Newly armed with a Soviet-made, nuclear powered submarine, the navy is being geared to play an assertive role in the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal, and the Arabian Sea. Indian navy has been given \$10 billion military budget for the current fiscal year.<sup>75</sup> Mr. R. R. Subramanian, a senior analyst at the Indian Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, says "The possibility of

the Chinese navy linking up with Pakistan in a war must be weighing heavily in the minds of our policymakers."<sup>76</sup>

According to Adm. Jayant G. Nadkarni, the new Indian navy chief, the Indian strategy is "not only to ensure that the sea areas of importance to us are controlled by us, but to deny them to our adversary. For this the primary weapon would be submarines."<sup>77</sup> The navy's multibillion dollar modernization plan has included the purchase of two West German Class 209 submarines, two Soviet made kilo class submarines and new Soviet Kashin two destroyers. The old British Leanders are being replaced by modern 5,000, Indian built frigates.

A new 704-acre submarine dockyard has been built with Soviet assistance at Vishakapatnam, headquarters of the Indian submarine force. Two additional Class 209 submarines, with wire-guided torpedoes, are being built at Bombay in collaboration with West Germany's Howaldtswerke. A western diplomatic source says the number of Indian crew members trained by the Soviets shows that the submarine is of the Alfa or Victor I class powered by two pressurized-water or liquid metal-cooled reactors. Either type can stay underwater for three months, but the Alfa is regarded as a superior attack submarine with a deep-diving maneuverability.

Despite attempts in recent years to diversify arms purchases, the Indian military remains dependent on Moscow for sophisticated weapon systems and spare parts. Soviet influence is the strongest in the Indian Navy. This is reflected in the predominance of Soviet-made ships in the Indian fleet. They include the new Yevgenya minesweepers, Nanuchka 2-class corvettes, Foxtrot submarines, and Polnochny-class landing ships.

Commercial Interests in the Indian Ocean Economic concerns play an important role in New Delhi's rationale for managing its Indian Ocean security

problems. India's 3,500-mile coastline and its significant mineral and fishing resources in its Exclusive Economic Zone remain vulnerable to seaborne threats. For example, production at offshore oil fields satisfies nearly two-thirds of domestic petroleum requirements. India's economic development depends heavily on oceanic trade (increasing commercial activity has led to a concomitant expansion of India's merchant fleet, now numbering 700 vessels). Maintaining India's sea lines of communication thus forms a primary IN mission.<sup>78</sup>

Recurrent Threats to Overseas Indian Communities. Difficulties experienced by the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka evidence the vulnerability of Indian communities throughout the region. In addition to the ties of citizen and national affinity, New Delhi's concern for the welfare of overseas Indian populations rests on commercial opportunities in Indian Ocean countries, foreign exchange revenues, and domestic politics. Indians residing abroad are an important source of foreign exchange, with remittances totalling \$5 billion annually. Indians residing in Indian Ocean Island/Littoral states is given at Table 1.

TABLE 1

## Indians Residing in Indian Ocean Island/Littoral States

Country	Residents of Indian Origin
Australia	41,664
Bahrain	40,000
Bangladesh	452
Burma	300,000-400,000
Comoros	178
Djibouti	350
Ethiopia	2,960
Indonesia	20,000
Iran	20,000
Kenya	70,000
Kuwait	81,000
Madagascar	21,500
Malaysia	1,170,000
Maldives	126
Mauritius	697,000
Mozambique	20,707
Oman	160,000
Qatar	40,000
Saudi Arabia	197,100
Seychelles	612
Singapore	159,500
Somalia	1,167
Sri Lanka	1,027,862
Tanzania	50,100
Thailand	25,000
United Arab Emirates	250,000
Yemen (PDR)	100,000

Source: "Indians Residing Abroad," Parliamentary News and Views Service (New Delhi: Monsoon S, 1984), pp. 16-21.

Finally, the safety of Indians abroad has become an important domestic political issue. Thus, Sri Lankan communal violence has precipitated demands by Tamil politicians in India that the central government take coercive steps against Colombo. New Delhi's desire to protect overseas Indian communities has led to the adoption of two complementary policies, viz., broadened economic and diplomatic linkages with Indian Ocean states and an enhanced maritime power projection capability, allowing India to impose stability on some regional actors by military means. Articulation of the "Indira



Doctrine," asserting a right to intervene in the affairs of neighboring countries if internal disorder threatens Indian security, serves as a corollary measure. Some commentators suggest that this principle be expanded to comprehend situations in which the lives and property of overseas Indians are at risk, even if Indian national security is not affected.<sup>79</sup>

Presence of Extraregional Naval Units in the Indian Ocean. Indian Ocean deployment of naval combatants by extraregional states forms an additional Indian security concern. Perception of this threat was first occasioned by the positioning of the U.S. aircraft carrier Enterprise in the Bay of Bengal during the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war. The intervening years have witnessed a substantial augmentation of U.S. and Soviet regional maritime strength.<sup>80</sup> New Delhi desires the withdrawal of U.S. and Soviet warships from the Indian Ocean. Most significantly, a materially reduced American and Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean would allow New Delhi to fill the resulting power vacuum (as the United States and U.S.S.R. filled the void left by Great Britain in the 1960's). This, in turn, would facilitate establishment of sponsor-client security relationships with island/littoral states. Indeed, government officials now discuss the possibility of demarcating a security zone encompassing both the Gulf of Oman and Strait of Malacca, with control of all Indian Ocean chokepoints as an ultimate objective.<sup>81</sup>

New Delhi recently concluded negotiations with Britain for the purchase of a second aircraft carrier, and is interested in other capital ships, including Soviet Kresta class guided missile cruisers. Indian Navy air defense resources have been augmented materially by the acquisition of Soviet Kashin-class guided missile destroyers. Furthermore, India is purchasing SSK type-1500 submarines from West Germany, kilo class submarines from Soviet Union, and constructing Godavari class guided missile frigates—an Indian

design based on the British Leader class frigate. Indian Navy's ability to discharge regional power projection responsibilities has been enhanced by the establishment of a coast guard which has assumed missions that were previously assigned to the navy.<sup>82</sup>

Pakistani-West Asian Security Relationships. New Delhi's concentration on Indian Ocean security issues, in part, arises from the need to limit involvement of West Asian states--situated on the Indian Ocean Periphery in subcontinental affairs. New Delhi is employing various measures to reduce the threat presented by Pakistani-West Asian states e.g., demonstrating consistent support from Arab causes in international forums, and alerting West Asian states to its growing military power through such mechanisms as port calls by IN warships.

Prestige and Psychological Factors. New Delhi's interest in controlling Indian Ocean affairs, with an attendant strengthening of maritime force projecting resources, forms part of a larger effort to validate its image as an emerging power. Indeed, a number of Indian leaders now believe their control should assume a central position in world politics.

Indian Navy Ship Visits. Warship visits to foreign countries traditionally have served as influence-building measures, demonstrating the naval power available to national decisionmakers. New Delhi now employs this technique to promote its political influence throughout the region. Thus, the past decade has witnessed IN visits to virtually all Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf states.

Diplomatic Initiatives. New Delhi's political agenda for the subcontinent and Indian Ocean contains three core elements: no foreign bases in South Asia; bilateralism in dealings with neighboring states and establishment of a Indian Ocean Zone of Peace (IOZP), entailing the removal of

extraregional military and naval forces. Accomplishment of these policy goals would greatly facilitate New Delhi's efforts to become the dominant power in Indian Ocean.

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## CHAPTER IV

### BANGLADESH'S OPTIONS FOR SECURITY

The emergence of Bangladesh on 16 December 1971 has added yet another dimension to the politics of South Asia. In spite of Bangladesh having a majority muslim population, she chose to break away from Islamic Pakistan, because of the latter's political and economic dominance over the Bengalis. She gained independence with the help of India's military intervention and the people of Bangladesh were truly grateful to India for that. However, soon a fear arose that Bangladesh may be dominated by India. The possibility of Indian domination created an anti-Indian feeling in Bangladesh because of Bangladeshi nationalism and residual anti-Hindu sentiment. Pre-1947 Bengal was a society in which the Hindus were dominant and few Bangladeshis would want a return to that kind of world. Bangladeshis could not be changed. Thus wrote the Guardian on August 22, 1972, "to be identified with India is about the last thing most Bangladeshis now want." The vicious spiral of Hindu-Muslim hatred would not be eliminated in dealings between India and Bangladesh. One thing must be clear, that the emergence of Bangladesh was not an outcome of Indian conspiracy. It was otherwise historically inevitable that it would emerge. However, time was the only factor.

In the tumultuous world of today a strong and stable Bangladesh would be of special significance not only to it, but also for peace in the South Asian Region. However, presently Bangladesh has many constraints like economy, population, defense, politics, etc., which need special attention before becoming strong. Moreover, expansion and modernization of her defense forces cannot be ignored. It is, therefore, imperative for Bangladesh to work out options for security in order to preserve her independence and sovereignty and pursue an independent foreign policy.

The objectives of the foreign policy of Bangladesh are: first, to consolidate the independence and sovereignty; second, to develop friendly bilateral, regional and international cooperation with a view to accelerating the process of political and social development of the country; and third, to cooperate with the international community in promoting the cause of peace, freedom and progress. In pursuing these objectives the foreign policy is guided by certain principles which are: respect for the sovereign equality of all nations and noninterference in the internal affairs of other states, peaceful settlement of all problems and disputes, and the right of every nation to determine the form of its social, economic and political system. These foreign policy objectives and principles rest on five pillars of the diplomacy; first, the U.N. Charter; second, the Non-aligned Movement; third, the Organization of Islamic Conference; fourth, the Commonwealth of Nations and fifth, a South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The initiative taken by Bangladesh in mootng the idea of SAARC in the year 1980 and hosting its first Summit at Dhaka on 7-8 December 1985 show her firm belief of promoting regional friendship and cooperation. The successful launching of SAARC, comprising of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives--linking a fifth of mankind--has created a new situation in the otherwise volatile South Asian region.

Based on the threats and other considerations, Bangladesh must work out certain options to safeguard her independence, integrity and solidarity. The options which Bangladesh may consider are given in the subsequent paragraphs.

#### Nationalism and National Integration

Nationalism is one of the most powerful forces of the world today. Rightly Carlton J. H. Hayes has defined nationalism as the "emotional fusion of nationality and patriotism."<sup>1</sup> Nationalism is the most effective barrier



against expansionism. It helps a nation to be bound as one single entity and preserve its sovereignty. It not only discourages external aggression but also centrifugal forces within the country. For nations without natural barriers as boundaries, nationalism acts as a binding force to preserve its territorial integrity and independence.

For Bangladesh the importance of nationalism and national integration can hardly be exaggerated. In states, consisting of heterogenous groups, failure in national integration can lead to secessionist movements, that can ultimately affect a state's territorial integrity and security. Luckily Bangladesh is composed of a homogeneous group of people, who makes national integration an attainable objective. The people ought to be imbued with the essence of Bangladeshi nationalism so that it can act as deterrent to any foreign aggression. Every Bangladeshi must realize that if Bangladesh survives, they survive as a nation.

#### Political Stability

The national character and will to survive as a nation are often reflected in the type of government and political stability that a nation enjoys. This strength is reflected in a state's foreign relations too. The nation's diplomats can negotiate from a position of strength when there is political stability at home. Suppression of legitimate rights would in the end lead to violence and mass uprisings leading to possible anarchy, instability and maybe separation. This has been well exhibited by the people of Bangladesh during the War of Liberation in 1971.

Political stability for Bangladesh is very important. This can be achieved by creating a viable political system which will ensure proper political participation. Such stability can be achieved only if all the political parties/forces vis-a-vis people participate willingly to create an

atmosphere conducive to honest politics in the country. Politically stable Bangladesh will be a stronger Bangladesh.

#### Economic Stability

Economic stability, like political stability is a double edged weapon. They are two sides of the same coin. Economic development can be achieved only in an atmosphere of political stability. A balanced economic growth and just economic distribution system are a must for stability and security of a state.

The development of Bangladesh is the most gigantic task that is being faced by the government. The existing problems like population control, natural calamities, etc., must also be solved to achieve economic stability.

#### Strengthening of the Armed Forces

The use of armed forces option, is considered to be the last resort in safeguarding the territorial integrity and independence of a state. A country's security, guaranteed by it's own military strength cannot be compared with any other guarantee. Some argue that small states can least afford strong armed forces since they stymie their economic development efforts. This view, however, should not hold good for Bangladesh. Bangladesh's armed forces are not really large in relation to its population size. She should maintain a well-trained, adequate and optimum military force, coupled with a high quality of political and military leadership. Side by side the people should also be willing to participate in the defense of their motherland. Bangladesh's military preparedness and capabilities are bound to deter any aggressor, because the costs of aggression will tend to be higher than the benefits derived from such venture.

### Selection of Instrument Power

China was placed in a difficult position by the crisis in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). True to its traditional sympathy for and support of the causes of national liberation, China was expected to extend support to the movement for Bangladesh, but the policymakers in Beijing misinterpreted the war of liberation, to be a bourgeois movement supported and sustained by the reactionary Indian government and the socialist imperialist Soviet Union. However, China never opposed the legitimate hopes and aspirations and right of the people of East Pakistan to self-determination. China did not recognize Bangladesh and had no diplomatic ties with her for over three years (1972-1975). During this period they were convinced that Bangladesh is a truly independent country and free from Indian and Russian dominance. Then in August 1975 China and Bangladesh established diplomatic relations. Since then China and Bangladesh had shown a steady development in all spheres and maintained excellent relations. China through all these years had proved to be a dependable friend of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's geographical position suggests that her main potential ally against India--is China. China would like to displace the Soviets in South Asia, or at least carve out a region or regions of the sub-continent, from where it can influence the course of events. Bangladesh's interests for close relationship with China is to counter India's attempt to dominate her. Considering the above facts, Bangladesh may consider, diplomatic recognition to China as an instrument of power.

Though the China factor helped Bangladesh to follow an independent policy free from Indian influence since 1976, it is debatable as to how effective is China as counterforce for Bangladesh against India. Isn't China's relationship with Bangladesh wholly guided by her own current national

interests? If Bangladesh is attacked by India, will China come forward effectively, specially when it has started dialogues with India in order to improve relations? Answers to such questions are difficult to get. Chinese mass interventions in the Korean War is not comparable with her support to Pakistan during 1971. In the latter case her policy was essentially a low-risk one. Nevertheless Sino-Bangladesh ties are promising and excellent. Beijing's support to Dhaka on the Farrakka Barrage issue as well as other problems between Bangladesh and India, its economic and military assistance are much valued by Bangladesh.

#### Relationship with the Superpowers

South Asia is relatively fortunate in its strategic placement and the equilibrium being established by the superpowers. In the South Asian system, Bangladesh, though a lesser actor, should not be overlooked. It poses no security problem to any country, yet it does represent a major prize both in the superpower rivalry and the balance of power in the region. Before 1975 (during the period of late Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League Government) its relationship with the Soviet Union was quite warm, but since then the relationship has been only friendly. It lacks the warmth primarily because of Bangladesh's present relationship with the United States and China.

#### Looking Towards International Organizations

Nowadays the international organizations are required to perform peacekeeping and moderating functions, the United Nations being the most important of them. Since her birth, Bangladesh realized that being a small country, her strength and influence in the community of nations lay in her membership of international organizations. Thus, besides being a member of the United Nations, she also chose to be a member of the Non-Aligned

Movement, the Commonwealth and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). Besides the United Nations, predominantly muslim, Bangladesh gives lot of importance to the membership of the OIC. To maintain peace and security in the region and to strength its position vis-a-vis its neighbors, Bangladesh ought to look towards the other OIC countries for both moral and financial support. The maintenance of close and friendly relationship and cooperation, with the OIC countries are of great importance in Bangladesh's defense.

#### South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

SAARC brain-child of Bangladesh has made a promising start after the first ever summit meeting of the South Asian Heads of States in Dhaka in 1985. Though SAARC is not a security-oriented organization it can have a creative role towards the security of small states in South Asia. Its institutions can guarantee communications among the South Asian states in order to resolve disputes peacefully. In a developed form, SAARC could act as a spokesman for the region in dealing with the rest of the world. SAARC can, thus be mutually supporting and beneficial to all the regional states, including Bangladesh.

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## CHAPTER V

### SUGGESTED MEASURES TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS OF THE SOUTH ASIAN REGION

It has now become evident that SAARC will be able to play a regional specific role of maintaining peace in South Asia. The future of SAARC largely depends upon India. The asymmetric power balance in the region is overwhelmingly in favor of India. Hence, along with other member states, India must pursue vigorously to make SAARC a success. The success of SAARC will usher a glorious future, one that will assure peace, stability and prosperity for all seven of its members. An effective SAARC will do away with the problems of small states of the region, specially the security problem.

Pursue a policy of economic cooperation among the states and such cooperation should include joint venture on long-term projects. Long term economic projects will have the added benefit of binding each other on a long term basis and pulling out will be costly. There are quite a few fields where cooperation can take place for long term economic projects. For example, hydro-power, irrigation and flood control, marketing of tea and jute, industrial joint ventures, and regional agricultural cooperation.

In the South Asian system India is certainly the bigger actor and on whom the most responsible role falls to maintain a balanced and correct relationship with all the smaller states in the region. The smaller states must be made to feel equals so that their fear of possible Indian domination no longer exists. Then only healthy interactions among these states will be possible, and which will ensure peace and prosperity in the region. The failure to obtain trust of the neighbors--bilaterally with each but as part of multilateral pattern enveloping the region--will not only perpetuate regional tensions but also continued international involvement.

Any major happenings in India is likely to affect the other--from change of government to communal riots. Bangladesh and India can easily solve their problems only if India shows a little magnanimity. Both the countries have a lot to gain through economic cooperation and economic interdependence.

Boundary disputes tend to be at the roots of a great deal of insecurity of the South Asian region. One approach to greater security could be based on treating the border as inviolable. Any residual disagreements and disputes should then be resolved on the principle of non-use of force. As India has common borders with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan and maritime boundary with Sri Lanka and Maldives, it is she who should take the initiative to solve this problem.

No matter how small a small state, it must possess a physical defensive capability. The object here is to face a possible aggressor with resistance and certainty of bloodshed; the aggressor should know that he will have to pay a high price for victory, that his action will not result in a walkover. And if a small state is prepared to wage a people's war, to bleed the invader with guerrilla actions even after he has achieved a partial success, that would act as a further deterrent to a would be aggressor.

Internal stability also is a must. A small state adds to its strength by having a happy and contented public, a sound and developing economy, an effective and honest administration, and well-developed institutions. States in which the government enjoys the loyalty and goodwill of the mass of the population can be sure of greater security and are less vulnerable to the mischief of their neighbors.

Reduce the number of forces from each others' borders in order to reduce tensions (example, Pakistan and India). As an initial step, Pakistan and India must freeze their conventional armaments at current levels. They should

initiate talks to reduce conventional forces. The financial resources thus saved should be diverted to strengthen the socioeconomic basis of national security.

South Asia should not cross the nuclear threshold. It should declare itself a "Nuclear Weapons Free Zone" and a South Asian agency and international agencies should monitor its implementation.

South Asian states should not destabilize each other by supporting insurgencies across their borders (examples: India's support to militant Tamil guerrillas in Sri Lanka and so-called Shanti Bahini in Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh).

All the states of South Asia should join in a non-aggression pact, a defensive mechanism for outlawing war as a means of solving regional disputes.



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

The security of small states in the contemporary world are influenced by external and internal factors. Though the international laws are not binding, it is universally accepted that nations have a right to protect their territorial integrity. The United Nations established to safeguard the security of member states has achieved only a limited success.

World public opinion and diplomacy have assumed a very important role in the preservation of national security. A country with a positive appeal especially in Western democracies has a definite chance of molding governmental policies in its favor. Through efficient and aggressive diplomacy, a small state can combine all its potentialities and thereby project its nation as a strong and unified power.

The Big Power rivalry which was confined to Europe and developed countries during the first Cold War has shifted its focus to the third world countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Regional conflicts have now assumed global dimensions as is the case in the Middle East, Afghanistan and Kampuchea. The Superpowers have tended to view them as a part of their overall strategic confrontation. In effect, these issues have remained unresolved and have also drawn the regional states into the vortex, forcing them to take sides. The Big Powers have followed interventionist policies through both covert and overt means in an attempt to change foreign or security policy orientations. Small countries ruled by autocratic or small juntas are more vulnerable to foreign inspired coups or assassinations.

Small states face a dilemma in striking a balance between the development of military strength vis-a-vis economic development. Unless nations are militarily prepared, their very existence is at stake. However, in the modern

world, it is adequate for a small state to maintain small but well equipped and well trained armed forces backed by strong political and military leadership as a deterrent against external aggression.

Most small states have increasingly seen collaboration on a regional basis as essential to contain regional conflicts and threats to security. Numerous large regional organizations such as the OAS, OAU and the Arab League have been in existence for long. However, their large size, laborious decisionmaking process, diverse geopolitical and economic outlook have made these organizations flaccid and largely ineffective. The smaller and sub regional organizations such as the ASEAN, SAARC, etc., have achieved more success due to their smaller size, common problems and a mature political leadership.

To be effective, regional alliances should have commonality of interests. Small size, geographic proximity, common language, religion, ethnic or cultural heritage would further bind the organization. The member states should have a compatible economic and political development to promote economic interdependence and collective self reliance. The member states should be able to approach regional conflicts with a view to promote overall regional interests, rather than narrow national interests.

For a variety of historical and geopolitical reasons, unfortunately, security has been and remains till today the primary concern of the small states of South Asia, instead of socioeconomic development which should have been the most logical national priority. While all states of the region are expending a disproportionate amount of their limited resources on defense, Sri Lanka stands out as an unhappy example of this trend. It has been compelled by circumstances to militarize itself and reorder its national priorities, to

the detriment of its economic development. Such is the security environment of small states in South Asia.

In a South Asian context, Pakistan, the Himalayan states, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, all have their geopolitical and geostrategic importance which is enough to invite the hostile attention of their neighbors and external powers. Bangladesh is geostrategically important because it links South Asia with Southeast Asia. It has also, by its geographical configuration, created communication bottlenecks for the entire northeastern region of India. It thus invites the hostile attention of its big neighbor.

South Asia is one of the poorer regions of the world. These countries are heavily dependent on foreign aid, yet they spend a huge amount of money for defense. This naturally deprives millions of people of their basic necessities of life. The perception of security threats among the South Asian States are similar. There are certain internal flaws which have prevented the South Asian States to live peacefully. The entire or most of the South Asian region was brought under the unified control of the Delhi Sultan, the Mughals and the British. The impact of these forces, which was shared by all countries of South Asia, led to the development of common political, legal and administrative institutions. Yet over the past forty years or so, these countries have not been able to solve their problems. Many outstanding issues still act as barriers to their good neighborly relationship.

ANNEX A

INDIA-SRI LANKA AGREEMENT - AUGUST 1987

I. Sri Lanka will consult India in the employment of foreign military intelligence personnel.

II. Sri Lanka will not permit the military use of Trincomalee or any of its other ports by any country prejudicial to Indian interests.

III. Sri Lanka will terminate Singapore contract for oil storage facility at Trincomalee and promote Indo-Sri Lanka joint venture.

IV. Sri Lanka to review existing agreements with foreign broadcasting facilities.

V. India to provide military aid, including hardware and troop training.

VI. India will not allow its soil for use by terrorist activities against Sri Lanka.

VII. India to deport all Sri Lankans found to be engaged in terrorist activity.

VIII. India will station peace-keeping force in Sri Lanka to guarantee and enforce the cessation of hostilities.

IX. Sri Lanka will disband home guard and paramilitary forces in east and northern provinces.

X. Indian election commission will monitor Sri Lankan elections.

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